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Mirza Ghulam Ahmad Qadiani[as]

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Patron	**Dr. Ahsanullah Zafar** Ameer Jama'at USA
Editor-in-Chief	**Dr. Naseer Ahmad**
Editor	**Dr. Karimullah Zirvi**
Editorial Advisor	**Muhammad Zafrullah Hanjra**
Cover: Latif Ahmed	*Gazette on line:*
Photos: Kalim Bhatti	*Ahmadiyyagazette.us*
	Hammad Malik

Ahmadiyya Gazette USA

Masjid Baitur Rehman
15000 Good Hope Road, Silver Spring, MD 20905
Phone: 301-879-0110 Fax: 301-879-0115
Editor: karimzirvi@yahoo.com
Tel. and Fax: 201-794-8122

Acronyms for salutations used in this publication

saw:	sallallahu alaihi wasallam (Peace and Blessing of Allah be upon him)
as:	alaihissalam (Peace be upon him)
ra:	radhi allahu 'anhu (May Allah be pleased with him/her)
rh:	rahimahullahu ta'ala (May Allah shower mercy on him/her)
aba:	ayyada hullah ta'ala binasrihil aziz (May Allah strengthen him with His mighty help)
swt:	subhana wa ta'ala

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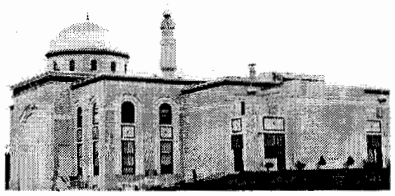

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Al-Qur'an

وَ اِذْ قَالَ اِبْرٰهٖمُ رَبِّ اَرِنِيْ كَيْفَ تُحْيِ الْمَوْتٰى ؕ قَالَ اَوَلَمْ تُؤْمِنْ ؕ
قَالَ بَلٰى وَلٰكِنْ لِّيَطْمَئِنَّ قَلْبِيْ ؕ قَالَ فَخُذْ اَرْبَعَةً مِّنَ الطَّيْرِ فَصُرْهُنَّ اِلَيْكَ
ثُمَّ اجْعَلْ عَلٰى كُلِّ جَبَلٍ مِّنْهُنَّ جُزْءًا ثُمَّ ادْعُهُنَّ يَاْتِيْنَكَ سَعْيًا ؕ وَاعْلَمْ
اَنَّ اللّٰهَ عَزِيْزٌ حَكِيْمٌ ۝

And *remember* when Abraham said, 'My Lord, show me how Thou gives life to the dead.' He said, 'Has thou not believed?' He said, 'Yes, *but I ask this* that my heart may be at rest.' He answered, 'Take four birds and make them attached to thyself. Then part each of them on a hill; then call them; they will come to thee in haste. And know that Allah is Mighty , Wise.' (2:261)

Commentary:

Surtu al-Ghusna Ilayya means, I inclined the branch towards myself (Lane). The preposition *ila* determines the significance of the word *Surhunna* in the sense of inclining or attaching and not cutting.

Juz means, a part or portion or division of a thing. Thus, if a thing consists of or comprises a group, the word "part" or "division" would signify each member of it.

This is a vision of Abraham. In 'taking four birds' the implication was that his posterity would rise and fall four times, which phenomenon was to be witnessed twice amng the Isralites, and to be repeated twice among the followers of the Holy Prophet of Islam who was descended from Abraham through Ishnael. The power of the Jews, the progeny of Abraham through Isaac, was crushed twice, first by Nuebuchadnezzar and then by Titus (17:5-8). Enc. Brit. under Jews); and each time God raised them after their fall, the second revival having been brought about by Constantine, the Roman Emperor who accepted Christianity. Similarly, the power of Islam, was first rudely shaken when Baghdad fell to the Tartar hordes, but soon it recovered from the crushing blow. The victors became the vanquished and the grandson of Halaku, the despoiler of Baghdad, was converted to Islam. The second fall came later when there was a general and wholesale decline of Muslims both in the spiritual and the political fields. The second renaissance of Islam is being brought about by the Promised Messiah.

Al-Hadith

عَنْ ثَعْلَبَةَ الْبُهْرَانِيِّ رَضِيَ اللّٰهُ عَنْهُ قَالَ: قَالَ رَسُوْلُ اللّٰهِ صَلَّى اللّٰهُ عَلَيْهِ وَ سَلَّمَ يُوْشَكُ الْعِلْمُ اَنْ يُّخْتَلَسَ مِنَ الْعَالَمِ حَتّٰى لاَ يَقْدِرُوْا مِنْهُ عَلٰى شَيْئٍ قَالُوْا: يَارَسُوْلَ اللّٰهِ! كَيْفَ يُخْتَلَسُ وَ كِتَابُ اللّٰهِ بَيْنَنَا نُعَلِّمُه' اَبْنَاءَنَا فَقَالَ رَسُوْلُ اللّٰهِ صَلَّى اللّٰهُ عَلَيْهِ وَ سَلَّمَ: اَلتَّوْرَاةُ وَ الْاِنْجِيْلُ عِنْدَ الْيَهُوْدُ وَ النَّصَارٰى فَمَا يُغْنِي عَنْهُمْ -

Hadhrat Tha'labah Buhrani[ra] relates that the Messenger[saw] of Allh said, "Soon the world will be deprived of knowledge, to the extent that people will be unable to understand it (the matters of guidance and wisdom). They said, 'O Messenger[saw] of Allh! How will we be deprived of knowledge while we have the Book of Allah with us?' We would be teaching it to our children. The Messenger[saw] of Allh said, 'The Torah and Gospel, were with the Jews and Christians but did not avail them anything.' "

(Usud al-Ghāba, p 236, vol. I)

عَنْ عَبْدِاللّٰهِ بْنِ عَمْرِو بْنِ الْعَاصِ رَضِيَ اللّٰهُ عَنْهُ قَالَ: سَمِعْتُ رَسُوْلَ اللّٰهِ صَلَّى اللّٰهُ عَلَيْهِ وَ سَلَّمَ يَقُوْلُ: اِنَّ اللّٰهَ لاَ يَقْبِضُ الْعِلْمَ انْتِزَاعًا يَنْتَزِعُه' مِنَ الْعِبَادِ وَ لٰكِنْ يَقْبِضُ الْعِلْمَ بِقَبْضِ الْعُلَمَآءِ حَتّٰى اِذَا لَمْ يَبْقَ عَالِمٌ اِتَّخَذَ النَّاسُ رُءُوْسًا جُهَّالاً فَسُئِلُوْا فَاَفْتَوْا بِغَيْرِ عِلْمٍ فَضَلُّوْا وَ اَضَلُّوْا -

Hadhrat 'Abdullah bin 'Amr bin Al-'As[ra] relates that he heard the Messenger[saw] of Allah say: "Allah will not take away knowledge suddenly. He will take it away from the people by taking away the real scholars. So, when there will remain no religious scholars, people will take ignorant persons as their leaders; when such ones will be consulted, they will render their opinions without having the knowledge. They themselves will stray away or they will lead others astray."

(Bukhārī kitābul 'ilm bāb kaifa yaqbiḍul 'ilm)

SAYINGS OF THE PROMISED MESSIAH[AS]

Recognizing a True Faith

In order to recognise a true religion it is necessary to look at three matters. In the first place, one must see what is the teaching of a religion concerning God. That is to say, what does a religion state with regard to the Unity, power, knowledge, perfection, greatness, punishment, mercy and other attributes of the Divine. . .

Secondly, it is necessary that a seeker after truth should inquire what does a religion teach with regard to his own self and with regard to human conduct. Is there anything in its teaching which would disrupt human relationships, or would draw a person into courses which are inconsistent with modesty and honour, or would be contrary to the law of nature, or would be impossible to conform to or carry out, or make it dangerous to do so. It would also be necessary to see whether some important teaching needed to control disorderliness has been left out. It would also be necessary to discover whether a religion presents God as a Great Benefactor with Whom a relationship of personal love should be established and whether it lays down commandments which lead from darkness into light and from heedlessness to remembrance.

Thirdly, it is necessary for a seeker after truth to satisfy himself that the god presented by a religion should not be one who is believed in on the basis of tales and stories and resembles a dead being. To believe in a god who resembles a dead being, belief in whom is not by virtue of his having manifested himself but is due to one's own good faith, would be to put him under an obligation. It is useless to believe in a god whose powers are not felt and who does not himself make manifest the signs of his own existence and life.

[Naseem-e-Dawat, Roohani Khazain, Vol. 19, pp. 373-374]

The religion that claims to be from God must show signs of being from God and should bear the seal of God, which should attest the fact that it is from God. Islam is such a religion. That God Who is hidden is known through this religion and manifests Himself to the true followers of this religion. A true religion is supported by the hand of God and through such religion God manifests Himself that He exists. The religions that depend entirely upon stories are only a form of idol worship. Such religions do not possess the spirit of truth. If God is alive as He was, and speaks and hears as He did, there is no reason why He should continue to be silent as if He does not exist. If He does not speak in this age, then equally and certainly He does not hear either. In other words, He is now nothing. That religion alone is true which demonstrates that God hears and speaks in this age also. In a true religion, God attests His existence through His speaking.

Search for God is a difficult matter. It is not an affair of worldly philosophers and wise men. Observation of the heavens and earth only leads to the conclusion that although orderliness indicates that the universe should have a Creator yet it is not proof that such a Creator in fact exists. There is a great deal of difference between ought to be and is. The Holy Qur'an is the only book that sets forth His existence as a fact and not only urges the seeking of God but makes Him manifest. There is no other book which makes manifest the Hidden Being.

[Chashmai Masihi, Roohani Khazain, Vol. 20, pp. 351-352]

Synopsis of Friday Sermon Delivered by Hadhrat Mirza Masroor Ahmad, Khalifatul Masih V[aba], on March 23, 2012 at Baitul Futuh Mosque, Morden, UK

Shermeen Butt

Hazoor Aqdas[aba] said with the grace of God today is an extremely happy and blessed day for the Community and it has the added blessings of Friday. It was 123 years ago today that a magnificent prophecy regarding the second phase of Islam was fulfilled. A prophecy of the Holy Prophet[saw] was fulfilled in accordance with the details he had given and the Promised Mahdi and Messiah's advent took place. With the commencement of him taking *Bai'at,* a Community of the latter-days which was to join the earlier ones was formed. We too are fortunate that we are part of this Community.

Each Ahmadi who claims to have taken the *Bai'at* of the Promised Messiah (on whom be peace) should be very acutely mindful that it is a huge responsibility. The task of the second phase of Islam which began with the Promised Messiah[as] requires that his followers instill a revolutionary change in themselves so that they may partake the blessings that are associated with the Promised Messiah[as].

Hazoor Aqdas[aba] said that each year on 23 March we should not be joyous merely because we are commemorating Promised Messiah Day or that *Alhamdolillah,* we are a part of this Community, or that we are aware of its early history or that we organize a *Jalsa* in this regard. Much more than this, we have to reflect whether we have fulfilled the dues of this *Bai'at.* Today is also a day of self-reflection and self-accountability. It is a day to ponder over the conditions of *Bai'at,* a day to renew our pledge and a day to generate resolve for the conditions of *Bai'at*. While it is a day to glorify God with profusion, it is also a day to invoke *Durood* on the Holy Prophet[saw] hundreds of thousands of times. *Hazoor Aqdas* said this significance of 23 March should always be in our view. As a reminder of this, today *Hazoor Aqdas* gave a discourse based on the words of the Promised Messiah (on whom be peace) expounding the ten conditions of *Bai'at*.

First Condition

The initiate shall solemnly promise that he/she shall abstain from shirk [associating any partner with God] right up to the day of his/her death.

The Promised Messiah[as] stated:

'*Tauhid* [Unity of God] does not simply mean that you say *la ilaha illAllah* with your tongue but then hide hundreds of idols in your heart. Anyone who gives reverence to his own plans, mischief or clever designs as he should revere God, or depends upon another person as one should depend upon God alone, or reveres his own ego as he should revere God alone, in all such conditions he is an idol-worshiper in the sight of Allah. Idols are not merely those that are made of gold, silver, copper or stones. Rather, everything, every statement, or every deed, which is revered in a manner that befits Almighty Allah alone, is an idol in the sight of Allah.... Remember that the true Unity of God, which God requires us to affirm and upon which salvation depends, is to believe that God in His Being is free from every associate, whether it be an idol or a human being, or the Sun or Moon, or one's ego, or one's cunning or deceit; it is also to conceive of no one as possessing power in opposition to

Him, nor to accept anyone as Sustainer, nor to hold anyone as bestowing honor or disgrace, nor to consider anyone as Helper or Supporter; and it is also to confine one's love to Him and one's worship, and one's humility, and one's hopes, and one's fear to Him. No Unity can be complete without the following three types of particularization. First, there is the Unity of Being—that is, to conceive the whole universe as nonexistent in contrast with Him and to consider it mortal and lacking reality. Secondly, the Unity of Attributes—that is that *Rabubiyyat* and *Uluhiyyat* are confined to His Being and that all others who appear as sustainers or benefactors are only a part of the system set up by His hand. Thirdly, the Unity of love, sincerity and devotion—that is, not to consider anyone as an associate of God in the matter of love and worship and to be entirely lost in Him. (*Siraj-ud-Din 'Isa'i ke Char Swalon ka Jawab, Roohani Khaza'in*, vol. 12, pp. 349–350 - Conditions of *Bai'at* and Responsibilities of an Ahmadi, pp. 17 – 19)

Second Condition

That he/she shall keep away from falsehood, fornication/adultery, trespasses of the eye, debauchery, dissipation, cruelty, that he/she will not permit himself/herself to be carried away by passions, however strong they might be.

The Promised Messiah[as] stated:

'The fact is that so long as a person does not renounce the selfish motives which prevent him from telling the truth, he cannot be considered truthful. If a person tells the truth only when he stands to lose nothing, but tells a lie when his honor, property or life are threatened, how can he be considered better than children and the insane? Do minors and the insane not speak this kind of truth? There is hardly anyone in the world who would tell a lie without any motive. Therefore, the truth that is forsaken when faced with possible loss can never form part of true morals. The real occasion of telling the truth is when one apprehends loss of life or property or honor. In this context, the divine teaching is: (*Al-Hajj*, 22:31) (*Al-Baqarah*, 2:283) (*Al-Baqarah*, 2:284) (*Al-An'am*, 6:153) (*Al-Nisa'*, 4:136) (*Al-Ma'idah*, 5:9)

Keep away from idol worship and lying because falsehood too is an idol; one who relies upon it ceases to rely upon God. Hence, by telling lies, one loses God. When you are summoned to testify to the truth, do not refuse to do so. Do not conceal true testimony; and he who conceals it, his heart is certainly sinful.

And when you speak, speak only what is absolutely true and fair, even when you testify against a close relative.

Hold fast to truth and justice, and bear witness only for the sake of Allah; never utter a lie even if telling the truth may endanger your lives or your parents' lives or other loved ones like your children. Let not hostility towards a people prevent you from giving true testimony. Truthful men and truthful women will earn great reward. They are accustomed to counseling truth... They do not keep company with the untruthful.'

(*Islami Usul ki Philosophy, Ruhani Khaza' in*, vol. 10, pp. 360–361 - Conditions of *Bai'at* and Responsibilities of an Ahmadi, pp. 25 - 27)

The Promised Messiah[as] further stated:

'Do not go near adultery. That is to say, avoid all occasions that create that thought in your mind. Avoid all ways that carry a risk of getting involved in this sin. Whoever commits adultery goes to the limit of the evil. Adultery is a very evil way. It stops you from reaching your true objective and carries major risks in it.' (*Islami Usul ki Philosophy, Ruhani Khaza'in*, vol. 10, p. 342 - Conditions of *Bai'at* and Responsibilities of an Ahmadi, pp. 28 - 29)

He stated:

'The Holy Qur'an, which lays down appropriate directions with reference to the natural desires and weaknesses of man, has adopted an excellent course in this regard. (24:31) Direct the believing men to restrain their looks and to guard their furuj. That is the act through which they will attain purification. Furuj does not refer merely to the private parts. It refers to all parts of the entry in the body including the ears. It has been prohibited to hear the song of an unrelated woman. Remember, it is proven by hundreds of experiments, that if God prohibits something, man has to leave it sooner or later.' (Malfoozat, vol. 7, p. 135 - Conditions of *Bai'at* and Responsibilities of an Ahmadi, pp. 30 - 31)

The Promised Messiah[as] stated:

'Islam has enjoined men and women equally on the observations of these conditions. As women are prescribed to wear the veil, so too are men commanded to keep their eyes down. *Salat* [obligatory Prayer], fasting, *Zakat* [obligatory alms], *Hajj* [Pilgrimage to the House of God in Mecca], the distinction between *halal* and *haram* , avoiding un-Islamic customs to honor God's commandment, are all injunctions that make the door of Islam very narrow and that is why everyone cannot enter this door.' (*Malfoozat,* new ed., vol. 5. p. 614 - Conditions of *Bai'at* and Responsibilities of an Ahmadi, pp. 30 - 31)

He further stated:

'When wickedness and immorality exceeded their limits, and people started disrespecting the commandments and signs of Allah, and were lost into the affairs of the world and its adornment, God caused their ruin at the hands of Halaku and Changez Khan. It is written that at that time a cry was heard from heaven. In short, the wicked and the immoral are lower and more despicable than disbelievers in the eyes of Allah. (*Malfoozat*, new ed., vol. 3, p. 108 - Conditions of *Bai'at* and Responsibilities of an Ahmadi, p. 35)

'Do not engage in fighting or discord with those who leave you because you have joined a Movement established by Almighty Allah; instead, pray for them in secret that Almighty Allah may grant them the insight and cognition that He has granted you. With your pious example and good behavior, prove that you have adopted the right path. Listen! I am appointed to admonish you repeatedly to avoid all occasions of discord and disturbance. Have patience even if you hear abuse. Respond to evil with goodness. If you encounter discord, slip away from that situation or respond with kind words.... I do not like when I learn that someone has quarreled despite being a member of my *Jama'at*. Almighty Allah does not like that the *Jama'at* that is destined to become a model for mankind should adopt such ways, which are not the ways of righteousness. Indeed, I tell you that Almighty Allah has emphasized this matter so much that if someone—declaring his membership of the *Jama'at*—does not show patience and perseverance, he does not belong to this *Jama'at*. The utmost cause of your provocation might be that you hear people abusing me. Leave that matter for God to decide. You cannot judge it. Leave my affair to God; you should show patience even in the face of such abuse.' (*Malfoozat,* new ed., vol. 4, p. 157 - Conditions of *Bai'at* and Responsibilities of an Ahmadi, pp. 42 - 43)

Hazoor Aqdas[aba] said this is exactly what is instructed to the Pakistani Ahmadis that in spite of the use of extremely abusive language for the Promised Messiah[as] there, our solution is only prayer.

The Promised Messiah[as] further stated:

'Accept that which is testified by intellect and human conscience and is testified by the books of God. Do not believe in God in a manner that creates discord between the books of God. Do not commit adultery. Do not tell lies. Avoid the evil look. Safeguard yourselves from wickedness, immorality, cruelty, dishonesty, and ways of rebellion. Do not be overpowered by carnal desires. Establish the five daily Prayers because human natures undergo five kinds of trials. Be grateful to your noble Messenger and invoke blessings upon him, for he is the one who showed you the way of recognizing God in the age of darkness.' (*Damimah Tiryaq-ul-Qulub, Ruhani Khaza'in,* vol. 15, pp. 524–526 - Conditions of *Bai'at* and Responsibilities of an Ahmadi, p 48)

Third Condition

That he/she shall regularly offer the five daily Prayers in accordance with the commandments of God and the Holy Prophet Muhammad[saw] and shall try his/her best to be regular in offering the *Tahajjud* and invoking durud on the Holy Prophet Muhammad[saw]. That he/she shall make it his/her daily routine to ask forgiveness for his/her sins, to remember the bounties of God and to praise and glorify Him.

The Promised Messiah[as] stated:

'So all ye people who count yourselves as members of my *Jama'at,* in heaven you shall be counted members of my following only when you truly begin to advance on the paths of righteousness. Offer your five daily Obligatory Prayers with such concentration and awe of mind as though you were seeing God in front of you. Observe the days of fasting for the sake of God in full sincerity. All among you who are liable for *Zakat* should never fail to discharge this important obligation. And those upon whom the pilgrimage to Mecca has become obligatory, without any obstacles standing in the way, should duly undertake that blessed journey. Do all good deeds with the proper care they deserve, forsaking evil from a real repulsion arising from the heart. Be very sure that no action, whatsoever, can take you to God if it is devoid of righteousness. The root of everything good is *Taqwa* ; in whatever action this root is not lost, that action will never be devoid or futile. (*Kashti-e-Nuh, Ruhani Khaza'in*, vol. 19, p. 15 - Conditions of *Bai'at* and Responsibilities of an Ahmadi, p 54)

He also stated:

'The Prayer is so powerful that the heavens incline towards the human with it. The one who does full justice to Prayers feels that he has died; his soul has melted and fallen at the threshold of Allah... A house in which Prayer is offered in this manner will never face destruction. It is said in hadith that if Prayer had been ordained to the people of Noah, they would not have been ruined. Hajj is obligatory but with certain prerequisites; so is fasting and *Zakat*. But the obligation to offer Prayer has no prerequisites. All other obligations are discharged once a year, but the Prayer is ordained five times a day. As long as the Prayer is not performed in accordance with all its requirements, it does not earn the blessings that it carries. Such allegiance [without discharging these obligations] in not of any benefit.' (*Malfuzat*, new ed., vol. 3, p. 627 - Conditions of *Bai'at* and Responsibilities of an Ahmadi, pp. 55 - 56)

'Get up at night and supplicate that Allah the Almighty may guide you to His path. The companions of the Holy Prophet[saw] also received their training step by step. What were they before? They were like a seed sown by a farmer. The Holy Prophet[saw] in turn watered and prayed for it. The seed was healthy, and the soil was fertile. With watering, it yielded excellent fruit. They walked the path of the Holy Prophet[saw] without hesitation. They did not wait for day or night. You should repent with a true heart. Wake up for *Tahajjud.* Straighten your hearts. Leave your weaknesses, and make your words and deeds correspond to the will of Allah the Almighty.' (*Malfoozat,* new ed., vol. 1, p. 28 - Conditions of *Bai'at* and Responsibilities of an Ahmadi, p 60

The Promised Messiah[as] stated:

'Man is a servant or slave. A slave is one who carries out all commandments of the master. Similarly, if you want to achieve grace through the Holy Prophet[saw] it is essential that you become his slave. Almighty Allah says in the Holy Qur'an: (39:%4) Here, slave means an obedient servant and not a creation. To become a slave of the Holy Prophet[saw], it is essential to invoke Allah's blessings upon him, not to disobey any of his commandments and to carry out all his injunctions. (*Al-Badr,* vol. 2, No. 14, April 24, 1903, p. 109 - Conditions of *Bai'at* and Responsibilities of an Ahmadi, p 64)

'...When one seeks strength from Allah—that is, does *Istighfar*—[one's] weaknesses can be removed with the help of the Holy Spirit and can be safeguarded from sin like the Prophets and Messengers. And if there

be someone who has already become a sinner, *Istighfar* saves him from the consequences of his evil deeds, i.e., from punishment. For no darkness can stay in the face of light. But the wrong-doers who do not do I*stighfar* suffer the consequences of their misdeeds.' (*Kashti-e-Nuh, Ruhani Khaza'in*, vol. 19, p. 34 - Conditions of *Bai'at* and Responsibilities of an Ahmadi, p 67)

Fourth Condition

That under the impulse of any passions, he/she shall cause no harm whatsoever to the creatures of God in general and Muslims in particular, neither by his/her tongue, hands, nor any other means.

The Promised Messiah[as] stated:

'Of these, the first moral quality is forgiveness, that is, to forgive someone's sins. The virtue in this is that the person who commits a sin causes harm to someone else and, therefore, becomes liable to be punished or to be put in jail or to be fined or be chastised with direct action. Thus, to forgive him, if forgiveness is appropriate, would be a good deed. In this connection the teaching of the Holy Qur'an is: ...and Allah loves those who do good. (Al-e-'Imran, 3:135)

That is, the virtuous are those who suppress their anger when it is appropriate and forgive when it is appropriate to forgive sins. A bad deed should be requited with an equal amount and in situations where forgiveness of sin is corrective without causing any harm—that is, forgiveness is granted when the occasion warrants and not otherwise—then it merits reward. (*Islami Usul ki Philosophy, Roohani Khaza'in*, vol. 10, p. 351 - Conditions of *Bai'at* and Responsibilities of an Ahmadi, pp. 79 – 80)

'...Seek forgiveness of Allah before the punishment of God comes to close the door of forgiveness. While the laws of this world are feared, why is it the laws of God are not? When calamities have occurred one has to go through them. Everyone should try to get up for *Tahajjud* and to include *Qunut* in the five daily Prayers as well. Repent from everything that would incur the wrath of Allah. Repentance means giving up all evil deeds and everything that goes against the pleasure of God and undergoing a true change and making progress and adopting the way of righteousness. In this, too, lies the mercy of Allah. Make your habits decent. Shun anger, replacing it with gentleness and meekness. Along with adopting good morals you should give charity as well. (76:9) Which means that for seeking the pleasure of God you feed the poor, the orphans, and the needy, and you say that you perform these acts only for the pleasure of the Almighty Allah, and you fear that extremely terrible Day. In brief, pray, ask forgiveness and keep giving charity, so that the Almighty Allah may deal with you with His Grace and Mercy.' (*Malfoozat,* new ed., vol. 1, pp. 134–135 - Conditions of *Bai'at* and Responsibilities of an Ahmadi, p 88)

Fifth Condition

That he/she shall remain faithful to God in all circumstances of life, in sorrow and in happiness, in adversity and in prosperity, in felicity and in trial; and that he/she shall in all conditions remain resigned to the decree of God and keep himself/herself ready to face all kinds of indignities and sufferings in His way and shall never turn away from Him at the onslaught of any misfortune; on the contrary, he/she shall march forward.

The Promised Messiah[as] stated:

'The people of the highest grade among the people—that is, people who are completely lost in the pleasure of Allah, and sell their selves to earn the pleasure of God—are the people upon whom the mercy of Allah descends.... In this verse Allah the Almighty says, 'Only he is delivered from all tribulations who sells his self in My way and for My pleasure. He proves with his utmost endeavors that he belongs to God and considers his entire being as something that has been fashioned for obedience of the Creator and service to the creation...' (*Report Jalsah A'zam Madhahib*, pp. 131–132 - Conditions of *Bai'at* and Responsibilities of an Ahmadi, p 92)

'A loved one of God sells his being in the way of God. In return, he earns the pleasure of God. Such are the ones upon whom the special mercy of God descends. (Report *Jalsah A'zam Madhahib*, p. 188 - Conditions of *Bai'at* and Responsibilities of an Ahmadi, p 92)

'Every true believer passes through such circumstances. If he becomes His with sincerity and fidelity, Allah becomes his friend. But if the structure of faith is weak, there are dangers. We have no knowledge of the secrets of anybody's heart... but anyone who totally belong to God receives His protection. Although He is the God of everyone, He manifests especially to those who hand themselves over to God. To hand oneself over to God means that the self be totally demolished and nothing should remain of it. That is why I tell my *Jama'at* again and again that they should take no pride in taking the pledge. If the heart is not purified, there is no merit in placing their hands in my hand.... But anyone who makes a true pledge attains forgiveness of even major sins and receives a new life.' (*Malfoozat*, new ed., vol. 3, p. 65 - Conditions of *Bai'at* and Responsibilities of an Ahmadi, pp. 98 - 99)

Sixth Condition

That he/she shall refrain from following un-Islamic customs and lustful inclinations and shall completely submit himself/herself to the authority of the Holy Qur'an; and that he/she shall make the Word of God and the sayings of the Holy Prophet Muhammad[saw] his/her guiding principles in every walk of his/her life.

Hazoor Aqdas[aba] cited the following *Hadith*:

Hadhat 'Amr Bin al-'Aufra has narrated that the Holy Prophet[saw] said, 'The person who revives any one of my *Sunnah* so that others start practicing it, he will reap the reward equal to all those persons' rewards who act upon that *Sunnah*, and their reward shall remain with them as well. The person who introduces an innovation and others adopt it, he shall share in the sins of all those who act on it, and their sins will remain with them as well.'

The Promised Messiah[saw] expounded:

'Look, Allah the Almighty says in the Holy Qur'an: (3:32) The only way to please Allah the Almighty is to be fully obedient to the Holy Prophet[saw]; and there is no other way that will lead you to the communion with God. The final objective of man should always be to find the One God who is without any partner. He should shun associating anyone with God and indulging in innovations! He should be obeying the Messenger (sa) and not following his personal lusts and base desires. Listen, I say it again: Man cannot succeed in any other way but by treading the true path of the Messenger[saw] of Allah. We have only one Messenger[saw]; and only one Holy Qur'an was revealed to that Messenger[saw]—obeying whom we can find God. The innovations introduced by the present day *fuqara'* and the methods of *Durood* and *waza'if* [prayer incantations] invented by the leaders of the hermitages are all a tool that leads a man astray. Stay away from them. These people have tried to break the Seal of the Prophets and in a way have made a different *Shari'ah*. You should remember that the key for opening the door of Allah's blessings and grace is only to adhere to the injunctions of the Holy Qur'an and to follow the Holy Prophet [saw] and to establish Prayer and keep fasting in the established manner. That person is lost who adopts any new path instead of following those established ways. That person shall end up dying in failure who does not comply with the dictates of Allah and His Messenger and walks divergent paths.' (*Malfoozat,* new ed., vol. 3, pp. 102–103 - Conditions of *Bai'at* and Responsibilities of an Ahmadi, pp. 117 - 118)

Seventh Condition

That he/she shall entirely give up pride and vanity and shall pass all his/her life in humbleness, cheerfulness, forbearance and meekness.

The Promised Messiah[as] stated:

'I tell you truly that on the Day of Judgment after '*shirk*'—associating partners with Allah—there will be no evil like arrogance. It is an evil that disgraces man in both the worlds. Divine mercy redresses everyone who believes in the Unity of God, but not the arrogant. Satan, too, claimed to believe in One God; however, he was arrogant and contemptuous towards Adam whom God loved. Satan criticized him and was ruined, and the yoke of curse hung around his neck. So, the first sin for which a person was eternally ruined was indeed arrogance.' (*A'inah-e-Kamalat-e-Islam, Roohani Khaza'in*, vol. 5, p. 598 - Conditions of *Bai'at* and Responsibilities of an Ahmadi, p 128)

He goes on to state:

'If you have any element of arrogance, hypocrisy, conceit, or indolence, then you are not worthy of acceptance. Do not deceive yourselves over a few things, in that you have achieved what you could, because God wishes that your entire being should go through a complete revolution. He demands a death from you, after which He shall give you life.' (*Kashti-e-Nuh,Ruhani Khaza'in*, vol. 19, p. 12 - Conditions of *Bai'at* and Responsibilities of an Ahmadi, pp. 128 - 129)

'If you wish to find Allah the Almighty, seek Him near the hearts of the meek. This is the reason Prophets of God adopted meekness. Similarly, it is required that people of bigger nations do not deride smaller nations; none should say their ancestry is higher. Allah the Almighty states that when you come before Me I shall not inquire of you about your nation; rather, the question would be, what are your deeds?

Likewise, the Prophet[saw] of God said to his daughter that 'O Fatimah, Allah the Almighty shall not inquire into one's lineage. If you commit a wrong Allah the Almighty shall not condone you because you are the daughter of the Prophet.

Thus, you should watch what you do at all times.'

(Malfoozat, new ed., vol. 3, p. 370 - Conditions of *Bai'at* and Responsibilities of an Ahmadi, pp. 137 - 138)

Eight Condition

That he/she shall hold faith, the honor of faith and the cause of Islam dearer than his/her life, wealth, honor, children, and all loved ones.

The Promised Messiah[as] stated:

'Revival of Islam demands a ransom from us. What is it? It is us dying in this very path. This is the death upon which the life of Islam, the life of Muslims, and the manifestation of the Living God depend. This is exactly what is called Islam, and God now wants to revive this very Islam. To bring about this great undertaking, it is essential that a grand enterprise that would be effective in every aspect should be established by His own initiative. So, the Wise and Powerful God did exactly that by sending this humble one for the reformation of mankind.' (*Fat-he-Islam, Ruhani Khaza'in*, vol. 3, pp. 10–12 - Conditions of *Bai'at* and Responsibilities of an Ahmadi, pp. 143 - 144)

Ninth Condition

That he/she shall keep himself/herself occupied in the service of God's creatures for His sake only and shall endeavor towards the beneficence of mankind to the best of his/her God-given abilities and powers.

'...Remember that God the Almighty likes good deeds very much, and He desires that sympathy be shown for His creation. If He desired harm, He would have directed us to be bad; but the Majesty of God is free from this. (Holy is Allah and Great is His station)...Therefore, all of you who have established a relationship with me

should remember that you should show compassion for everyone regardless of their religion; and be good to all without any discrimination because this is the teaching of Holy Qur'an: (76:9) Those captives and prisoners [at the time of the Prophet[saw] were mostly non-believers. Now, you can see the scope of kindness in Islam. In my opinion, perfect moral teaching is not found anywhere except in Islam.' (*Malfoozat*, new ed., vol. 4, pp. 218 - Conditions of *Bai'at* and Responsibilities of an Ahmadi, pp. 152 - 153)

'I am deeply grieved when I see or hear that someone did something that does not fully conform to Islamic teachings. I am not happy about these incidents. I still view my *Jama'at* like a child who takes two steps and falls four times. But I do believe that Allah the Almighty will make it perfect. Therefore, you should make an effort, plan, strive, and pray continuously that Allah may show His grace, because nothing is possible without His grace. When He favors, He opens up all ways.' (*Malfoozat*, new ed., vol. 4, pp.219 - Conditions of *Bai'at* and Responsibilities of an Ahmadi, p 153)

'Be kind and merciful to humanity, for all are His creatures. Do not oppress them with your tongue, your hands, or in any other way. Always work for the good of mankind. Never unduly assert yourself with pride over others, even those who are placed under you. Never use abusive language for anyone, even if he abuses you. Be humble in spirit, kind, gentle, and forgiving, sympathetic towards all, and wish them well, so that you may be accepted.... If you are big, have mercy on those who are small and not contempt. If you are wise and well-versed in learning, serve the ignorant with words of wisdom. Never desire to bring disgrace on their lack of knowledge by trying to show off your own learning. If you are rich, instead of treating them with self-centered, disdainful pride, you should serve the poor. (*Kashti-e-Nuh, Roohani Khaza'in*, vol. 19, pp. 11–12 - Conditions of *Bai'at* and Responsibilities of an Ahmadi, pp. 164 - 165)

Tenth Condition

That he/she shall enter into a bond of brotherhood with this humble servant of God, pledging obedience to me in everything good for the sake of God, and remain faithful to it until the day of his/her death. That he/she shall exert such a high devotion in the observance of this bond as is not to be found in any other worldly relationship and connection that demand devoted dutifulness.

The Promised Messiah[as] stated:

'This Prophet directs you in matters that are not opposed to sane reason. And he prohibits you from things that common sense also prohibits you from. And he makes pure things lawful and impure things unlawful. And he removes the burdens from the nations that they were buried under. And he frees them from shackles that were preventing their necks from being straightened. Therefore, those people who will believe in him and will strengthen him by joining him and will help him and will follow the light that has been brought down with him, they will escape the hardships of this world and the hereafter.' (*Barahin-e-Ahmadiyyah*, vol. 5, *Roohani Khaza'in*, vol. 21 - Conditions of *Bai'at* and Responsibilities of an Ahmadi, pp. 201 - 202)

The Promised Messiah[as] stated:

'Now rush towards me because this is the time that he who runs toward me now is like the one who gets on board the ship right at the time of a storm. But if someone does not accept me, I see that he is throwing himself into a storm and has no means of saving himself. I am a true intercessor as a shadow and reflection of that Exalted intercessor, who was not accepted by the ignorant people of that age and who was gravely insulted, that is Hadhrat Muhammad the Chosen one[saw]. (*Dafi'ul-Bala'. Roohani Khaza'in*, vol. 18, p. 233 - Conditions of *Bai'at* and Responsibilities of an Ahmadi, p 192)

He stated:

'O ye dear ones, O ye the flourishing branches of the tree of my being, who, by the mercy of God Almighty, which you enjoy because of having entered into the covenant of *Bai'at* with me! you are devoting your lives, comfort, and properties to this cause. I am aware that you will deem it your good fortune to carry out whatever I might impose upon you to the full extent of your capacity. But I do not desire to lay down anything by myself as an obligation upon you, so that your service should not be the result of my directive, but should proceed out of your own free will. Who is my friend and who is dear to me? Only he who recognizes me. Only he who believes that I have been sent and accepts me as those are accepted who are sent. The world cannot accept me because I am not of the world, but those whose natures have been invested with a portion of the other world accept me and will accept me. He who turns away from me, turns aside from Him Who has sent me. And he who establishes a relationship with me establishes a relationship with Him from Whom I have come. I hold a lamp in my hand. He who comes to me will surely partake of its light, but he who, out of ill-thinking, runs away will be cast into the darkness. I am the citadel of security for this age. He who enters therein will be secure against thieves and robbers and wild beasts. He who seeks to remain away from my walls will be confronted with death from every direction, and even his dead body will not be saved. Who is it who enters my citadel? Only he who discards vice and adopts goodness, and gives up crookedness and treads along the path of truth, and frees himself from the bondage of Satan and becomes an obedient servant of Allah the Almighty. Everyone who does that is in me, and I am in him. But only he has the power to attain to this upon whom Allah the Almighty bestows a pure soul. Then He places His Foot in the hell of such a one's inner self, and it becomes cool as if there had never been any fire in it. Then he marches forward till the spirit of Allah the Almighty dwells in him, and, with a special manifestation, the Lord of the world establishes Himself in his heart. Then his old humanity is consumed and a new and pure humanity is bestowed on him. For him Allah the Almighty becomes a new Allah and establishes a special relationship with him and he is equipped in this very life with the pure fittings of a heavenly life.' (*Fat-he-Islam, Roohani Khaza'in*, vol. 3, pp. 34–35 - Conditions of *Bai'at* and Responsibilities of an Ahmadi, pp. 193 - 195)

Hazoor Aqdas said this is the teaching of the Promised Messiah[as] which he expects of us. Today we need to self-reflect and self-examine in terms of these conditions of *Bai'at.* May God forgive our weaknesses and may He remove them and bring about pious change in us. May we be able to fulfill the objective of the advent of the Promised Messiah (on whom be peace).

Next *Hazoor Aqdas* said that 23 March is also commemorated as Pakistan Day and addressing Pakistani Ahmadis Hazoor asked them to pray for the country in the critical juncture that it is going through. May God save Pakistan, may He save Pakistan for the sake of the Ahmadis. *Hazoor Aqdas* read out extracts from the general media of the sub-continent while highlighted the significant role Ahmadis played in the creation of Pakistan.

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BIRTH ANNOUNCEMENT

Borey Bashir Song and Saima Nusrat Song have been blessed with a beautiful baby girl: Maya Sameena Song

Born Sunday, February 10th, 2013, Weighing 6 pounds 9 ounces and very healthy!

She is the maternal granddaughter of Mubashar Ahmad Khan and Salma Saeed Khan of Silver Spring, MD jamaat. Please keep our family in your prayers.

Jazak Allah

HADHRAT MASIH MAU'OOD[as]

Hadhrat Mirza Ghulam Ahmad[as] was born on 20 February 1835 in Qadian, an outlying small town about 70 miles to the north east of Lahore. His family was of Persian origin and had been settled at Samarkand in Central Asia. In the first half of the 16th century, his ancestor, Mirza Hadi Baig, moved from Samarkand into India together with a couple of hundred retainers and settled in the Eastern Punjab, where he founded the township which eventually became known as Qadian. As Mirza Hadi Baig was a third or fourth removed cousin of Emperor Babar, he was appointed Judge (Qadhi) and administrator of a sizeable tract of land which comprised over 100 villages around Qadian. The town was named Islampur Qadhian. In the course of time, Islampur was dropped and Qadhian, by easy transition, became Qadian.

The descendants of Mirza Hadi Baig continued to flourish at Qadian, and maintained a semi-royal state under the Moghul emperors. The decline of the Moghul imperial authority, which started towards the middle of the 18th century, began to affect the fortunes of the chieftains of Qadian also. Mirza Gul Muhammad, the great-grandfather of Hadhrat Mirza Ghulam Ahmad, was an enlightened, learned and pious person who made Qadian a centre of learning and a resort for scholarly divines. He had a very generous disposition and gave away several villages to smaller Muslim chieftains who had lost their own estates to the Sikhs whose power was on the increase at the cost of the central Moghul authority.

Mirza Gul Muhammad was succeeded by his son, Mirza Ata Muhammad, during whose time Sikh depredations progressively reduced the area comprised within the Qadian estate. Finally, the Ram Garhia Sikhs obtained possession of Qadian itself through trickery and Mirza Ata Muhammad and the members of his family had to move from Qadian and took refuge in the neighbouring state of Kapurthala. Mirza Ata Muhammad died in exile in Kapurthala, but his body was carried by his son, Mirza Ghulam Murtaza, to Qadian, and was given decent burial in the ancestral graveyard.

When Maharaja Ranjit Singh established his power over the Punjab, he permitted Mirza Ghulam Murtaza, father of Hadhrat Mirza Ghulam Ahmad, to return to Qadian and restored to him a few of the villages that had been originally comprised in the Qadian estate.

With the birth of Hadhrat Mirza Ghulam Ahmad, the fortunes of the family improved to some degree and the intervening period of poverty and privation came to an end.

Mirza Ghulam Murtaza took up military service under Maharaja Ranjit Singh and won distinction in some campaigns. Later, he and his elder son, Mirza Ghulam Qadir, rendered meritorious service to the British, which was duly appreciated by the authorities. Throughout his remaining life, Mirza Ghulam Murtaza continued to spend money, time and effort in the useless and profitless attempts to recover at least some of the villages that had originally been comprised within the Qadian estate. The futility of his attempts embittered his days and he died a disappointed man.

His eldest son, Mirza Ghulam Qadir, who now became head of the family, had in the meantime been appointed to a minor post in the civil administration of the district at Gurdaspur, at a distance of approximately eighteen miles from Qadian.

From his childhood, Mirza Ghulam Ahmad exhibited a religious bent, which became increasingly marked with the passage of the years. As he grew up, he began to devote more and more time to religious exercises and the study of religion, more particularly of the Holy Qur'an. His father arranged for his tuition at home and he never went to school. When he grew up, his father became anxious to divert his attention to secular pursuits, which might prove of benefit to him in later life, but without much success. Out of a feeling of filial obedience and respect for his father, Mirza Ghulam Ahmad would undertake and carry out such particular missions, pertaining to his father's attempts to recover a portion of the patrimony, which his father assigned to him.

However, he did this with reluctance, as his heart was not engaged in worldly affairs, which had no appeal for him.

At one time, his father procured his appointment to a minor administrative post at Sialkoat, which he also took up out of a spirit of obedience to his father, and which he readily resigned as soon as his father's attitude permitted him to do so.

He described his situation at his father's death in the following words:

"I was 34 or 35 years of age when my father died. In a dream, I had been warned that his death was approaching. He was then in Lahore and hastened to Qadian. He was then suffering from dysentery but I had no apprehension that he would die the following day. In fact, there had been some change for the better in his condition and he appeared quite steadfast. The following day, we were all with him at noon when he kindly suggested that I should go and have some rest, for it was the month of June and the heat was intense. I retired into an upper room and a servant began to massage my feet. Presently I fell into a light slumber and the revelation came to me:

وَالسَّمَآءِ وَالطَّارِقِ ۝

That is (Arabic) We call to witness the heaven where all decrees originate and We call to witness the event which will happen after the setting of the sun. (*Tadhkirah*, p. 30).

I was given to understand that my father's death was to take place at sunset, and that this revelation was by way of condolence on behalf of God Almighty. Holy is Allah! How Glorious is He that He conveyed His condolence on the death of a person who had died sorrowing over the waste of his life. Most people would be surprised at this interpretation of mine that God Almighty condoled with me. It should, however, be remembered that when God, glorified be His name, treats someone mercifully, He deals with him like a friend. We read in the traditions that on certain occasions God Almighty laughed. This also is an expression of the same type.

When I received this revelation, which presaged the death of my father, the thought passed through my mind, due to my humanity, that some of the means of income, which were available to my father, would now be closed and we might be confronted with difficulties. Thereupon I received another revelation:

اَلَيْسَ اللّٰهُ بِكَافٍ عَبْدَهٗ ؕ

Is not Allah sufficient for His servant?

This revelation conveyed great comfort and satisfaction to me and it found its firm place in my heart. I call to witness the God Almighty in Whose hand is my life that He has fulfilled this comforting revelation in a manner that I could not have imagined. He has provided for me as no father could have provided for anyone. I have been the recipient of His continuous bounties, which I find impossible to count.

My father died the same day after sunset. This was the first day on which I experienced a sign of Divine mercy through revelation concerning which I cannot imagine that it would ever cease to have effect during my lifetime. I had the words of the revelation carved on a semi-precious stone and set in a ring, which I have with me securely. Nearly 40 years of my life passed under the care of my father, and with his departure from this life, I began to receive Divine revelation continuously."

[Kitabul Bariyyah, Ruhani Khazain, Vol. 13, pp. 192-195, footnote]

This was Hadhrat Mirza Ghulam Ahmad's[as] first experience of Divine revelation. As he has himself observed, he was 34 or 35 years of age at that time.

As time passed, this experience multiplied progressively and gained in volume and scope, comprising Divine assurances of security, progress, support and success, and became studded with grand prophecies and Divine signs.

On his father's death, Hadhrat Mirza Ghulam Ahmad[as] became entitled to half of his father's property, but he left the management of the whole of it in the hands of his elder brother and was content with the meagre and austere provision that his brother made for his maintenance. The world was not his major concern and all his interest and attention were concentrated on communion with the Divine and winning His pleasure.

His father had arranged his marriage at an early age, but even the responsibilities of marriage failed to wean him away from the pursuit of that which he had made the purpose of his life. From his first wife, he had two sons, Mirza Sultan Ahmad and Mirza Fadhal Ahmad. Under Divine direction, he married a second time, in 1884, into a noble Sayyed family of Delhi. His second wife bore him several children of whom three sons and two daughters survived him. The eldest of these was a son born on 12 January 1889, who was named Bashiruddin Mahmud Ahmad. In his birth was fulfilled a grand multi-faceted prophecy of his father which had been published on 20th February 1886.

Hadhrat Mirza Ghulam Ahmad's[as] study of religion was not confined to Islam. At an early age, he entered upon a study of the principal faiths then current in India, which deepened his appreciation of the teachings of Islam, till he emerged as a champion of Islam. He was deeply depressed by the feeling that there was little understanding of true Islamic values even among the Muslim divines and that the common run of Muslims were a prey to ignorance and superstition and had little regard for Islamic teachings.

The collateral branches of his own family were sunk in superstition and made a mockery of religion and religious practices. Some of them openly denounced Islam, gloried in their disbelief, even reviled the Holy Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) and held the Holy Qur'an in contempt. This occasioned great distress to Hadhrat Mirza Ghulam Ahmad[as], and, though he made repeated efforts to win them back to sincere allegiance to Islam, God Almighty, the Holy Prophet[SA] and the Holy Qur'an, his efforts had little effect upon the attitude, conduct, and behaviour of his collaterals. He was further depressed by the Divine revelation:

(Arabic): He (God) will cut asunder thy collaterals and will begin (His favors) with thee.

By the time he had arrived at forty years of age, his mind was possessed by a strong urge to undertake the championship of Islam vis-à-vis all other faiths, and he finally announced that he had resolved to set forth the truth of Islam and the utter beneficence of its teachings in an epoch-making book which he designated *Braheen-i-Ahmadiyya.* In the preface of the book he announced that if anyone, professing a faith other than Islam, would set forth a convincing refutation of the proofs and arguments expounded in the *Braheen-i-Ahmadiyya* and would furnish in support of his own faith even one-fifth of the proofs he had adduced in support of Islam, he would be rewarded with 10,000 rupees, at which figure Mirza Ghulam Ahmad valued his entire property at the time. This challenge has not been seriously taken up for more than a century.

While he was still occupied with the compilation of *Braheen-i-Ahmadiyya*, of which only four parts had yet been published, he received the revelation that God had commissioned him as the Reformer of the fourteenth century of the *Hijra,* and had entrusted the revival of Islam to him. In pursuance of this commission, he laid the foundation of the Ahmadiyya Muslim Community on 23 March 1889. Soon thereafter, it was revealed to him that he was the Promised Messiah and *Mahdi* (the Divinely Guided Leader) whose advent in the latter days had been prophesied by the Holy Prophet of Islam[saw].

The publication of the very first volume of *Braheen-i-Ahmadiyya* was acclaimed by the Muslims as an outstanding and matchless performance, and leading Muslim divines, newspapers, and journals acclaimed the publication of the great work in laudatory terms. In consequence of the publication of the successive parts of *Braheen-i-Ahmadiyya*, its revered author had become the most renowned and honoured personage in the contemporary world of Islam.

With the announcement of his claim that he had been appointed the Promised Messiah and *Mahdi*, a storm of bitter and abusive opposition was let loose against him from all directions. He was condemned as an apostate from Islam, who had put himself outside the pale of Islam and all sorts of opprobrious epithets were applied to him. He was called anti-Christ and it was declared that his life was forfeit. In the estimation of the Muslim divines, he fell utterly from grace and no protestation or explanation on his part served to soften the bitterness of their hostility towards him. This continued all through the rest of his life, and though ninety years have passed since his demise, he and his daily expanding Movement continue to be the sharpest thorn in the sides of the Muslim divines. Bitter persecution breaks out from time to time against the members of his Movement, but this only serves to furnish greater publicity to the Movement, in consequence of which increasing numbers of reasonable and reflecting people continue to identify themselves with the Movement.

One of the earliest revelations vouchsafed to Hadhrat Mirza Ghulam Ahmad[as] was:

(Urdu): I shall carry thy message to the ends of the earth.

At the time of the revelation, he was not widely known even in his own hometown and he lacked altogether all normal means of publicity and propaganda. At that time, Qadian had not yet found a place on the maps and did not even possess a telegraph office, was not connected with the railway system of the province, and could not be reached by a metalled road. The nearest railway station and telegraph office were at a distance of 11 miles, a journey to which occupied the better part of three hours. Despite all this lack of normal facilities, the Ahmadiyya Muslim Community has, during the last hundred years, spread to the farthest corners of the earth and the prophecy just mentioned has been, and continues to be, fulfilled in an astonishing manner.

The main thrust of the opposition to the claim of Hadhrat Mirza Ghulam Ahmad[as] has been, and continues to be, that he claimed to be a Prophet in contradiction of the Holy Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be on him) being the Seal of the Prophets as mentioned in the Holy Qur'an (Al-Ahzab, 33:41). This objection derives from deliberate misrepresentation of his claim. His opponents first wrongly defined Prophethood as confined to law-bearing Prophets and then turned around and condemned him on the ground that he virtually claimed to be such a Prophet, and this in the face of his repeated and emphatic denial of such a claim. Innumerable times he affirmed that he believed that the Holy Prophet[saw] was the Seal of the Prophets in its highest and widest meaning and that his own claim of Prophethood meant only that he was favoured with frequent converse with God; that he had brought no new law, was completely subject to the Holy Qur'an and that he had been favoured with frequent converse by God on account of his utter devotion to the Holy Prophet[saw] and as his perfect reflection. This is put beyond doubt by the following extracts from his writings.

(Persian Couplet):

I am among the lovers of the Holy Qur'an and the Holy Prophet[saw]
That is the path through which I came, and this is the path on which I shall always go.

The summary and essence of our faith is that:

There is no one worthy of worship except Allah and Muhammad is the Messenger of Allah.

(Essence of Islam, Vol. 1)

STATUS OF AND HEAVENLY SIGNS IN SUPPORT OF THE PROMISED MESSIAH[as]

Karimullah Zirvi

Status of the Promised Messiah[as]

Many traditions of the Holy Prophet[saw] have stated the status of the Promised Messiah and Mahdi[as]. One of the traditions is as follows:

فَإِذَا رَأَيْتُمُوْهُ فَبَايِعُوْهُ وَلَوْ حَبْوًا عَلَى الثَّلْجِ

فَإِنَّهُ خَلِيْفَةُ اللّٰهِ الْمَهْدِىُّ

When you hear the advent of Mahdi, it is then enjoined on you to enter his *Bai'at* even if you have to walk on snow by crawling and creeping to reach him, for indeed he is Khalifatullah Mahdi.

(Kanzul 'Ummal., Also footnotes to Musnad Ahmad bin Hanbal, Vol. 6, pp. 29-30; Sunan Abu- Dawud Vol. 2, Bab Khurujul Mahdi)

Other traditions of the Holy Prophet[saw] are:

فَلْيُقْرِئْهُ مِنِّى السَّلاَمَ

(The one who recognizes the Promised Mahdi), he should convey my Salaam' to him.

(Durr-e-Manthur, Vol. 2, p. 445)

وَ عَلٰى رَأْسِهٖ مَلَكٌ يُّنَادِىْ هٰذَا الْمَهْدِىُّ

خَلِيْفَةُ اللّٰهِ فَاتَّبِعُوْهُ

Angels of God will work in support of the Mahdi and through God's revelations will encourage people to join the followers of the Mahdi

(Ya nabil-ul-muwaddah, p 447)

مَنْ مَاتَ وَ لَمْ يَعْرِفْ إِمَامَ زَمَانِهٖ فَقَدْ

مَاتَ مِيْتَةَ الْجَاهِلِيَّةِ

He who dies in a condition that he has not recognized the Imam of the Age dies a death of ignorance

(Musnad Ahmad bin Hanbal Vol. 4, p. 96; Baharul Anwar, Vol. 13)

The Promised Messiah and Mahdi[as] has described ten distinctive favors which God has bestowed upon him:

1. God has bestowed upon me the understanding of the Qur'an.
2. God has taught me the language of the Qur'an in a miraculous manner.
3. God accepts my prayers more than of any other person.
4. God has supported me with heavenly signs.
5. God has bestowed upon me signs from the earth.
6. God has promised me that I shall triumph over everyone who comes forward to oppose me.
7. God has given me the glad tidings that my followers will always triumph over others through their reasoning in support of the truth, and that they and their progeny will be greatly honored in the world, so that they should see that he who comes to God never suffers a loss.
8. God has promised me that till the Day of Judgment, He will continue to manifest my blessings, so much so, that kings will seek blessings from my garments.
9. Twenty years ago, God informed me, that I would be denied and that people would not accept me, but that God would accept me and would manifest my truth through powerful assaults.
10. God has promised me that for the purpose of repeating the light of my blessings, a person will be raised from among my progeny into whom God will breath the blessings of the Holy Spirit. He will be characterized by inner purity and will have a close relationship with God. He will be a manifestation of the True and High, as if God had descended from Heaven.

(Tohfah Golarhviyyah, Ruoohani Khaza'in, Vol. 17, P. 90)

The Promised Messiah and Mahdi[as]. further writes:

"I declare in the Name of God Almighty who holds my life in His hands that He has appointed me, and He has named me as a 'Prophet', and he has addressed me by the name of 'Promised Messiah', and in my support He has shown glorious signs which reach to 300,000 in number."

(Tatamm'a Haqiqatul Wahi,Roohani Khaza'in, Vol. 22, p.. 68)

Heavenly Signs in Support of the Promised Messiah[as]

The heavenly signs shown by God in the support of the Promised Messiah and Mahdi[as] are most remarkable and the majority of them were the fulfillment of his prophecies contained in Divine revelations granted to him. The Promised Messiah and Mahdi[as] began to receive revelation in 1876, and as time passed, his experience of revelation multiplied progressively. Everyone of his revelation was clearly fulfilled according to its tenor at its due time; some of them that related to future events have been fulfilled from time to time since his death and some await fulfillment.

He was granted progress and victory in the face of severe opposition and heavy odds. His enemies were humiliated and were unsuccessful. He won all the lawsuits filed against him, as was foretold. His wicked enemies were victims of Divine punishment as a result of his prayers. He has given many instances of acceptance of his prayers for his friends in most unexpected circumstances. Some signs are the incidents where many sick persons close to death and suffering from incurable diseases recovered as a result of his prayers. In some of the signs God showed natural catastrophes in his support. Some signs are related to challenges of *Mubahlah* (prayer contest) to his opponents. Whosoever accepted such a challenge died or met with a dire fate. The most remarkable and dramatic fact about his signs is that he foretold the results by quoting his revelations which were frequently published or made known beforehand to hundreds or thousands of people. He challenged his opponents, both Muslim and non-Muslims, to compete with him in showing such signs of Divine support. No one had the courage to accept the challenge. The Promised Messiah and Mahdi[as] claimed that his signs were the result of blessings of the

Holy Prophet[saw]. They were in fact continuing miracles of the Holy Prophet[saw]. He was merely his servant whose mission was to uphold his honor in this age. The revelations granted to him and the signs shown by him are irrefutable proof of his truth and prove that Islam is a true and living religion. Thus Hadhrat Mirza Ghulam Ahmad, the Promised Messiah and Mahdi[as] gave fresh and living proof of the existence of Almighty God and challenged the unbelievers and atheists of the modern age.

(The Promised Messiah and Mahdi, Dr. 'Aziz Ahmad Chaudhry, p. 28)

The Eclipses of the Sun and the Moon

The Holy Prophet[saw] had announced a very clear and definite sign of the appearance of the *Mahdi* which was not in the power of anyone to manufacture or improvise. *Darqutni*, an eminent and recognized authority on *Hadith*, had recorded that the Holy Prophet[saw] said:

إِنَّ لِمَهْدِيِّنَا آيَتَيْنِ لَمْ تَكُوْنَا مُنْذُ خَلْقِ
السَّمٰوٰتِ وَالْاَرْضِ تَنْكَسِفُ الْقَمَرُ لِاَوَّلِ لَيْلَةٍ
مِنْ رَمَضَانَ وَ تَنْكَسِفُ الشَّمْسُ فِى النِّصْفِ
مِنْهُ وَلَمْ تَكُوْنَا مُنْذُ خَلَقَ اللّٰهُ السَّمٰوٰتِ
وَالْاَرْضَ

For our *Mahdi* there are appointed two signs which have never been manifested for any other claimant since the creation of the heavens and the earth. They are that at his advent there shall occur an eclipse of the moon on the first of (Its appointed nights), and an eclipse of the sun on the middle one of (Its appointed days) and both will occur in the same month of *Ramadan*.

(Sunan Dar Qutni vol 2, p. 65, Bab Safatus Salatulkhusuf)

In this *Hadith* four conditions have been stated, which if fulfilled will become a sign of the truth of the *Imam Mahdi*:

The eclipses of the moon and the sun occur according to the set laws of nature as related to astronomy. According to these laws, if *Hijrah* Calendar is used, the dates on which a lunar eclipse can occur are the 13th, 14th or 15th nights of the lunar month. And the dates on which a solar eclipse can occur are the 27th, 28th or 29th of the lunar month. The sign mentioned by the Holy Prophet[saw], therefore, was that the moon would be eclipsed on the 13th night of the lunar month, and the eclipse of the sun would take place on the 28th of the same month, which will be the month of *Ramadan*. The sign was to appear after and not before the advent of the *Mahdi*.

Some have objected that the lunar eclipse should have occurred on the first night of *Ramadan*. They ignore the laws of astronomy and the established movements of celestial bodies. Furthermore, the Arabic word for moon used in the above stated *Hadith* is *Qamar*, which is used for the moon on the fourth lunar night and onward; whereas, the moon of the first three nights is called *Hilal* in Arabic.

The above stated *Hadith* does not mean to say that the lunar and solar eclipses have never occurred in the month of *Ramadan* before. In fact, according to astronomers they have occurred many times in the month of *Ramadan* since the time of the Holy Prophet[saw]. The crucial point is that there would be a claimant of being *Mahdi* at that time and he will proclaim this occurrence to be a sign for him. This is exactly what happened.

Hadhrat Mirza Ghulam Ahmad[as] founded the Ahmadiyya Movement in Islam in 1889, and announced his

claim of being the Reformer of the age. Later on, in 1891, under Divine guidance he claimed to be the Promised Messiah mentioned in the prophecies of the Holy Prophet[saw], and Jesus[as] in Bible. The sign of eclipses of the moon and the sun in the month of *Ramadan* was shown in 1894. An eclipse of the moon occurred on Thursday night, the 13th of *Ramadan*, 1311 *Hijrah* (21st March, 1894), and the eclipse of the sun occurred on the 28th of the same month of *Ramadan* (6th April, 1894), in exact accord with the prophecy of the Holy Prophet[saw]. Hadhrat Mirza Ghulam Ahmad[as] proclaimed the eclipses in *Ramadan* of 1894 to be a great sign in his favor. There have been many claimants of being *Mahdi* in Islamic history, but this sign was never shown for anyone of them. This sign about the *Mahdi* is found in the books of *Hadith* collected by both *Shi'ah* and *Sunni* sects. A great many of Islamic religious books mention this prophecy about the expected *Mahdi.*

(The Promised Messiah and Mahdi, Dr. Aziz Ahmad Chaudhry, pp. 77-78)

These eclipses were visible over a large part of Asia including India. The same phenomenon was repeated in the United States of America in 1895.

(The Story of Eclipses, George F. Chambers, p 33, London, 1902)

The sign of the eclipses was beyond the power of any person to show. The Promised Messiah and Mahdi[as] considered this sign of the eclipses to be very significant and said that with this sign, the foundation of the victory of Islam had been laid. He also said that mosques will be built and people will join Islam in hordes. The Promised Messiah and Mahdi[as] has written about this sign in many of his books. He writes:

"And I also swear by God Almighty that I am the Promised Messiah and I am the same person who was promised by the Prophets. There is news about me and my age in the Torah, the Gospels, and the Holy Qur'an. It is stated that there will be eclipses in the sky and severe plague on the earth."

(Da'fiul Bala', Roohaini Khaza'in, Vol. 18, p. 1

Extraordinary and Miraculous Knowledge of the Holy Qur'an and Arabic Language

Arabic is the language of the Holy Qur'an. For perfect understanding and propagation of Qur'an, adequate knowledge of Arabic is essential. The Promised Messiah and Mahdi[as] had no formal education of Arabic in any school. To begin with his knowledge of this language was elementary. However, after God selected him as a reformer--a *Mahdi* and Messiah, he was blessed with extraordinary and miraculous knowledge of Arabic. He claimed that Allah invested him with knowledge of forty thousand important words of Arabic through Divine revelation in a single night. This was no empty boast. Subsequently he wrote a score of books in Arabic including, *'Karamatus Sadiqin, Nurul Haq*, and *Khutbah Ilhamiyyah'* and challenged Muslim religious scholars of India and Arabia to compete with him in producing religious literature in Arabic of equal literary excellence and richness in meaning. None among his opponents dared to take up the challenge and they were all silenced. He claimed that Allah the Gracious has blessed him with extraordinary and miraculous knowledge of the Holy Qur'an and Arabic language. He also challenged his opponents to compete with him in writing commentary in Arabic of any selected verses of the Holy Qur'an. Scholars from Arabic countries were also invited. No one dared to accept the challenge. The unique excellence of his Arabic prose and poetry is admitted by recognized authorities of Arabic language. This was a great intellectual miracle shown by the Promised Messiah and Mahdi[as].

(The Promised Messiah and Mahdi, Dr. 'Aziz Ahmad Chaudhry, p. 30)

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THE EFFECTS OF THE WRITINGS OF THE PROMISED MESSIAH[as] AND THE IMPRESSIONS OF OTHERS

Hafiz Mazhar Ahmad, Rabwah, Pakistan

Translated By: Arifa Haleem

God Almighty conferred the title of *Sultanul Qalam* to the Promised Messiah[as] and in reality those spiritual treasures came out from his pen which were hidden for the last thousands of years and such writings were discovered which gave life to the people who were dead for a long time. They blessed the blind with sight and became the cause of pulling many people from darkness to Divine light. Hazoor[as] says, the person who will drink a cup (of spiritual wine) from my hand that has been given to me, he will never die (spiritually). The life giving words that I say and the words of wisdom that I speak, if anyone else could utter such words then consider I have not been sent by God.

(Izala Auham Roohani Khazain Vol. 3 P.104)

For the continuity of composing and compiling how deeply the Promised Messiah[as] felt the pain and how much he was concerned about it. Hazoor[as] says:

The other branch is of expenditure for which I am very much worried. If the series of compilation discontinues due to non-availability of capital then thousands of facts and knowledge full of wisdom will remain hidden. I am greatly grieved about it. My exhilaration lies in it and in it lies my solace that whatever has been put into my heart through knowledge and revelation, I should also transfer it into the hearts of other people. The people living far off do not know but those who always come and go, they know how deeply I am absorbed in compiling and in this way how much time and comfort of my life I am sacrificing. I am serving this purpose all the time but if there is no material for printing the books and there is no money for the expenditure of printing staff, then what should I do? It is just as if a beloved son of someone dies, and he is grieved, so in the same way I am grieved over not printing such a book which is beneficial to the men of God and an illuminated lamp for the truth.

(Majmua Ishtiharat vol. 3. 4th October 1899.)

These books converted many strangers into closely related ones and many more people were fascinated by them. Its few examples are here:

I have Learned the Holy Qur'an from Mirza Sahib

Hadhrat Khalifaul Masih I[ra] was very fond of collecting the books and studying them. About his study of The Holy Qur'an, he says, "I spent hundreds and thousands of Rupees to buy books for the Holy Qur'an. Even in Mecca and Medina where I lived for many years with the same flavor of fondness so that I may be able to know where this verse was revealed but the fact is that I have learned the Holy Qur'an from Mirza Sahib".

(Tarikh e Ahmadiyyat vol. 4)

Precious Writings.

Hadhrat Khalifatul Masih II[ra] while explaining the importance of the writings of the Promised Messiah[as] says, "The advent of the Promised Messiah[as] was from God, so every word out of his pen is more precious than all the books and writings of the world. If this question ever arises, that even one line written by the Promised Messiah [as] should be saved or all the books of the community authors, then my response will be that in order to keep his one line safe, I will prefer to burn all these books by throwing kerosene oil on them and put all my efforts to save this line."

(Report Majlis e Mashawrat 1925, page 39)

Disbelief Disappeared.

After studying "*Fateh Islam*

and *Tauzih-e-Maram*" when Hadhrat Munshi Sahib started reading *Braheene Ahmadiyya* then all the disbelief started to disappear. He himself says that *Braheene Ahmadiyya* was a tumultuous ocean of the water of life. What was *Braheen*, It was an "antidote *kohlani*" or an "antidote *arba dafia Sarah* and *Laqwah*". What was *Braheen,* it was a Divine light and due to its manifestation the darkness disappeared. The bad effects of the Arya, Brahmu and disbelieving lecturers had killed me and most of the people like me. So I was living a meaningless life under these influences.

While reading *Braheene Ahmadiyya* I read the proof of God Almighty and when I came to the margin comment No.1, of page 90 and on the comment No 11 of page 149, then suddenly my disbelief disappeared and my eyes were opened in such a way as if some sleeping or dead person wakes up and becomes alive.

(Register Rawayat Hadhrat Aqdas vol.7 page 46 -47 With reference to Daily Al-Fazl April 26 2002)

Sirr ul Khilafa and Maulana Obaidullah Bismal

In the Arabic writing of" *Sirrul Khilafa*" that the Promised Messiah[as] published in 1894, he discussed the issue of *Khilafat* in detail. This writing like lightning affected Maulana Obaidulah Bismal, a famous *Shi'a* Persian language scholar, a unique poet and a renowned author of "*Uriah fi Manaqib Asadullah Al Ghalib*" and his world of thoughts totally changed in a day. While studying "*Sirrul Khilafa"* he saw Hadhrat Imam Hussain in a dream that *Syedul Shuhada* was sitting on an elevated place and saying, convey Mirza Sahib the tiding that I have arrived. So the next day Maulana Bismal presented himself before the Promised Messiah[as] and took the Pledge of Allegiance.

(Seerat ul Mahdi Part 3 p. 99 Tarikh Ahmadiyyat vol.1 p.503.)

The Source of Travelling from Darkness to Light

The Promised Messiah's[as] books became a cause for hundreds of misguided people to be blessed with Divine Light and guidance. There are some examples from these books.

In 1887 Maulvi Hasan Ali Bhagalpuri for the first time came to Qadian to see the Promised Messiah[as]. About his meeting with the Promised Messiah[as], he narrates, When I was leaving, the Promised Messiah[as] gave this humble person a copy of each of the books, "*Braheene Ahmadiyya*" and "*Surma Chashm Arya".* I read them, then after reading I came to know that Mirza Sahib is a high ranking author. Especially by studying the commentary of *Surah Fatihah* I was astonished at the wisdom of Mirza Sahib. Later on when in 1894 when he came for a second meeting with Hazoor, God Almighty blessed him with the favor of taking the Pledge of Allegiance.

What would he himself be like?

Hadhrat Haji Ghulam Ahmad, resident of Karyam was introduced to Ahmadiyyat by the Promised Messiah's[as] book *Izala Auham* .The study of Izala Auham guided him towards the truth. Later on "*Sat Bachan* "and "*Noorul Qur'an*" each of the two parts removed all the hurdles in the way. After *Istikhara,* in 1903 he came to *Darul Aman* in Qadian. After the Asar Prayer he heard the Promised Messiah[as] delivering *Darse Qur'an.* His deep knowledge of the meanings of the Qur'an and Commentary left a special effect on him. He asked a person, is this Masih Mau'ood? He said, he is Maulvi Noorud Din. On hearing this he was very happy that if the clerics of his court are so excellent then what would he himself be like. He says, I asked where the Promised Messiah[as] could be met. He said at the time of *Maghrib* Prayer, he will come to *Baitul Mubarak*, and then he can be visited. At *Maghrib* time we went to a small mosque on a balcony and *Maghrib* prayer was led by Maulvi Abdul Karim Sahib[ra], now deceased. After the end of the prayer when Hadhrat Sahib sat down he shook hands with Hazoor. Haji Sahib says, the countenance of Hazoor was spiritually enlightened and holy

(Rufaqa Ahmad Vol. 10 p. 80)

Hadhrat Hakim Mohammad Hussain *Al-Maruf Marham-e-Isa* used to narrate that the reason for his becoming Ahmadi was that he used to study the books of the late Sir Syed Ahmad Khan. After that he heard about the Promised Messiah [as]and saw some advertisements too. He also got the opportunity to study *Braheenne Ahmadiyya* .So in this way his heart was captivated by the love of the Promised Messiah[as] and he went to Qadian. He visited the Promised Messiah[as] through Khalifatul Masih I[ra] and took the Pledge of Allegiance.

(Tarikh-e-Ahmadiyyat Lahore p.132)

Even the Arabians cannot bring better words than this

Hadhrat Maulvi Muhammad Saeed Sahib Shami Trablisy who was a highly placed elder and great scholar was remembered by the name of *Fakharul Shoura* and *Majadul Adba.* In Hazoor's "*Aaina Kamalat Islam*", Hadhrat Hafiz Muhammad Yaqub introduced him to the "*Na'tia Arabic Qasida*" written in the honor of Prophet Muhammad[saw]. Then after reading it, he spontaneously said, even the Arabians cannot write better words than this.

(313 Rufqa Sidq-o-Safa p.101)

Munshi Abdur Rehman was the inhabitant of Maharth. His choice of residence was Kapurthela. So in this way his name was mentioned along with the companions of Kapurthela. When Hazoor announced the taking of *Bai'at*, after *Istekhara,* he immediately left for Ludhiana for the *Bai'at* and took the Pledge of Allegiance.

(Al-Fazl, July 2,1938 p.5.)

Hadhrat Mufti Muhammad Sadiq first time heard the name of the Promised Messiah[as] at the age of 13. During his conversation, a person named Hakim Ahmad Din said to the Mufti Sahib, there lives a Mirza Sahib in Qadian who receives prophetic revelations. Later on due to his being a student of Maulana Noorud Din, he got very good feelings for the Promised Messiah[as].

In 1890 he studied The Promised Messiah's [as] book "*Sheikhul Islam*" and after reading the book, he came to Qadian and met Hazoor in Baitul *Mubarak.* He says I cannot describe what it was that attracted me to accept the truth of Hadhrat Sahib and also to take the Pledge of Allegiance. There was nothing else except the radiant and luminous holy appearance of his blessed face that was proving his truthfulness

(Zikre Habib from Hadhrat Mufti Muhammad Sadiq Sahib, P. 6)

Hadhrat Munshi Abdul Aziz Sahib Aujalvi narrates; Around 1890 I was a Patwari in Jugatpur Kolian Tehsil Gurdaspur. After making some efforts I got myself transferred to village Sekhwan Tehsil Gurdaspur. At that time I was not an Ahmadi but I had heard about Hadhrat Sahib. It was not opposition but mostly the thought that was the hindrance in my way to become Ahmadi was that all the scholars are against Hadhrat Sahib on reaching Sekhwan I became acquainted with Mian Jamaldin, Imamudin and Khairudin. They gave me Promised Messiah's[as] book *Izala Auham* to read.

After supplication, I started reading the book .While reading this book the truthfulness of Hadhrat Sahib got a strong hold in my heart like a nail and all the doubts were gone. After a few days I went to Qadian with Mian Khairudin. Then for the first time near the round room I met Hadhrat Sahib. By looking at Hadhrat Sahib I said to Mian Khairud Din, the spiritually illuminated appearance of his face is not like that of the liars but it is the manifestation of truth and so I took the Pledge of Allegiance.

(Seeratul Mahdi vol.1 part 3 p. 617.)

Opinions of the others

There is an Arabic proverb,

وَالْفَضْلُ مَا شَهِدَتْ بِهِ الْأَعْدَاءُ

The excellence and status of anything shows only at that time when other people also agree with it. From this perspective when we see the writings of the Promised Messiah[as] then it becomes very clear like the sunshine that not only friends but also the opponents admit that the writings of Hazoor are magnificent. Some of the reviews are here.

Review of Sufi Ahmad Jan

Hadhrat Sufi Ahmad Jan Sahib who was a noble elder and spiritual guide of his time and also the father in law of Hadhrat Khalifatul Masih I[ra]. His impressions *about Braheen-e-Ahmadiyya* were registered in "*Izala-e-Auham*". He said the book (*Deen e Haq*) proves the truthfulness of the prophethood of Muhammad[saw] and the Holy Qur'an by three hundred strong intellectual arguments. This book rejects Christians, Aryas, Naturiya, Hanud, and Brahmu Samaj, etc., all these collectively anti Islam religions by virtue of verification. Hazoor, the author of the book, advertised to give ten thousand rupees if any opponent or any person could respond to prove Islam a false religion, and refute all, half or one fourth of the arguments, the author will transfer his property worth ten thousand rupees to him .This was advertised in the first part of *Braheen.* This book uproots the foundation of the non-believers and opponents .It provides such a strength to the beliefs of the followers of Islam

which shows what a great blessing faith and Islam are and what a great wealth the Holy Quran is and what a great truth *Deen-e-Muhammad*[saw] is. The verses of the Holy Qur'an that have been quoted in this book as references at their required places are close to 20 chapters. This book converts the disbelievers into believers, and those who are slow to believe makes them alert, and those who are careless and unaware gives them awareness, and makes the believers perfect devotees and also establishes the roots of strong Islamic beliefs and annihilates those whims that the opponents spread. In this age of the 14 th century there is a storm of indecency and disorder in every religion and every nation. Someone said,

دیر و حرم میں کوئی نہیں اپنی راہ پر
کافر بنے ہوئے ہیں مسلمان بنے ہوئے

No doubt it was the need of the time to have such a book and such a *Mujadid*, as the book *Braheene Ahmadiyya* and its author Hadhrat Mirza Ghulam Ahmad Sahib, who is benefitting with the everlasting blessings and who in every way is present to prove the truth of Islam to the opponents. The person praised and described person is not from the ordinary scholars and common humble divines but he is from God Almighty and specially appointed for this purpose. He receives Divine Revelations and God Almighty speaks to him. The author is this 14th century's *Mujadid, Mujtehid, Muhadis* and perfect individual of *Ummah Muhammadiya*.

(Tasirat Qadian p.64-68 Al-Fazl june 2, 1931, p.5 col.2)

This Person is from Divine Scholars

When *Braheen* was printed, and Khalifa Syed Muhammad Hassan Sahib studied it, he became so fascinated by Hazoor that he started to take a prominent part in its publishing. He not only used to study *Braheen* with great interest but also made the others read it aloud for him and enjoying it for hours always uttered these words again and again,

"Indeed this man is from Godly scholars"

Review of Aligarh Institute Gazette

The deceased (Hadhrat Mirza Ghulam Ahmad[as]) was a renowned author and the founder of the *Mirzai* sect. He was born in 1839 or 1840.He got a complete education in the eastern sciences. Even up to the last day of his life he remained a great lover of books and avoided the distraction of worldly professions. For a few years he worked as a government employee in Sialkot but after resigning he came back to his home in Qadian Punjab. From 1874 -1876 he very forcefully wrote against the Christians, Aryas and Brahmu Samaj. In 1880 he started writing his first book in the defense of Islam and for its response he offered a reward of ten thousand Rupees. He claimed to be the Messiah of the 19th century and started taking *Bai'at*. The number of people who were taking *Bai'at* was fifteen thousand. He used to meet the scholars of other religions also and many times he was declared an infidel. Many law suits were placed against him. He is the author of eighty books that he has left behind. Out of these books twenty are in the Arabic language. No doubt the deceased was a great wrestler for the cause of Islam.

(Aligarh Institute Gazette-Tashhizul Isam Vol.3.No. 8 , 1908 p. 332.)

Confession of Curzon Gazette Delhi, Union Gazette Breilly

The well-known Editor, Mirza Hairat Sahib Delhvi writes, those noble services for Islam that the deceased has rendered in the opposition of Aryas and Christians, they in reality deserve a lot of praise. He changed the outlook of this *Manazra* (Public Debate) and laid the foundation of modern literature in India. Not only as a Muslim but also as a research scholar we accept that not even any leading *Arya* and prominent priest had the courage to speak out in confronting the deceased.

Although the deceased was a Punjabi but his pen had so much power that even today in the whole Punjab and entire Indian subcontinent no writer of this power exists. His forceful literature has its own unique splendor and it is a fact that by reading some of his writings one goes into a state of ecstasy. He made his way clear by passing through the prophecies of death, opposition and criticism and reached at the heights of progress.

(Curzon Gazette Delhi 1st June 1908 Tarikh Ahmadiyyat Vol.2 P.566).

The opinion of Hasan Nizami Delhvi

Mirza Ghulam Ahmad was a great learned divine elder. A study of his writings and *Malfoozat* are providing a lot of benefit and we have to speak out and acknowledge his vast knowledge, superiority and excellence.

(Akhbar Mnadi Feb. 27, March. 4th
Tarikh e Ahmadiyyat vol. 2 p.571)

Scholarly Review of Maulana Abul Kalam Azad.

This man was a very great personality whose pen was a charm and voice magic. This man was fully saturated with intellectual wonders, whose glance was seditious, whose voice was forceful like the Doomsday and with whose fingers the strings of revolution were entangled i.e. his fingers moved the strings of reformation, and whose two fists were the cuffs that generated thunderous lightning. This person for thirty years had been forceful and fierce like a storm and earthquake for the religious world i.e. he served as the epicenter of religious shock waves for a long time. He like the Doomsday's violent noise had awakened those who were in a deep sleep of negligence. In spite of the differences about some of his claims and views, these Muslims, the educated and enlightened Muslims admitted his exaltation and on his demise they were made to realize that one of their eminent persons has departed forever and along with, the confrontation with the opponents of Islam and the magnificent defense of Islam that was associated with his person has also ended. His distinction that he had been fulfilling the duty of a victorious General against the opponents of Islam, forces us to realize and openly acknowledge so that this grandly organized movement which humiliated and devastated our enemies for a long time should continue to flourish in the future too. The literature of Mirza Sahib that appeared in confrontation with the Christians and *Aryas* has got the certificate of general acceptance and in this peculiarity he does not need any Introduction.

Though today it has completed its mission, yet we have to accept the value of this literature whole heartedly because that time can never be forgotten with the lamentations of the heart when Islam was surrounded by the attacks of the opponents and Muslims who in this visible and perceptible world as a source of protection were appointed for its defense by the Real Protector. They were desperately grieved because of their vices and the mistakes they had committed .They were leading a miserable life and did not do anything for Islam or were not capable to do anything. A part of the credit for the defense of Islam that started from the side of the Muslims goes to Mirza Sahib. This defense of Islam not only blasted the initial influence of Christianity which was under the shadow of the state and in fact it was its strength and life. Millions of Muslims were saved from its successful and fierce attack and the magic of Christianity started to vanish like smoke. In short this service of Mirza Sahib will keep the coming generations under debt that by joining the first row of the people who were doing *Jihad* of the pen performed the duty of defending Islam from the side of the Muslims and left behind such a memorable literature which should flow like live fresh blood into the veins of the Muslims of this time and the spirit of supporting Islam should be the prominent mode visible in their national customs. Besides this Mirza Sahib has rendered very special service for Islam in breaking the poisonous fangs of Arya Samaj.

Up to the last days of his life Mirza Sahib continuously remained busy in removing the gilt from the face of Arya Samaj that was coated by the Hindu Reformers of 19th century. The writings that he had written in confrontation with Arya Samaj shed light very clearly on this claim. In future no matter how extensive our endeavors for religious defense may be, it is impossible that these writings can be ignored. Natural wisdom, practice, skill and the habit of continuous discussions created a special grandeur in Mirza Sahib. Besides his own religion, he had a vast look at other religions and he could use this knowledge very nicely. This proficiency of preaching and teaching grew in him so perfectly that the addressee, he might be of any ability, nation or religion, had to reflect deeply over his spontaneous answer. It was the claim of Mirza Sahib that he was the command and Justice for everyone but there is no doubt that as compared to all these different religions, he had a very special ability to make Islam prominent and this was all due to his natural capability, delight of study and a lot of practice. There is no hope that in future such a glorious man will

ever again be born in the religious world of Indian subcontinent who in this way may focus all his high aspirations only on the study of religions.

(Akhbar Wakil Amertsar Al Bader June 1908 p.2.) (Badr June 18 th 1908 p.2 col.1)

Statement of Maulvi Zafer Ali Khan

Mirza Sahib confronted the Hindu and Christian religions with great competency. His writings *Surma-e-Chashm and Chashmae Masihi* etc. against the followers of Arya Samaj and the Christians have been very well written.

(Zamindar September 12, 1923 Ref. Tarikh e Ahmadiyyat Vol. 2. P. 571.

Review Islami Asul Ki Philosophy.

This was such a powerful and remarkable lecture about which God Almighty had already given the tiding i.e., "The article was declared the most superior one." Then after the deliverance of the lecture, the opponents confessed it factually that Hazoor's article was superior to the other articles.

Newspaper General of Calcutta and Gohar Asifi

In short it also proves from the proceeding of this convention that there was only Hadhrat Mirza Ghulam Ahmad[as] chief of Qadian who in this field of contest fully fulfilled the obligation of Islamic wrestling i.e., he with full force fought for the cause of Islam and amended this agreement which from the various sects of the Indian cities appeared in the form of legal documents decorated with their signatures. The truth is that if the article of Hadhrat Mirza Sahib had not been presented in this gathering then the Muslims would have been stained with shame and disgrace but God Almighty's Powerful Hand saved the Holy Book from degrading its status of respect. Due to this article he was also blessed with such a victory that not only the people in favor but even the opponents with their entire true natural passions uttered such words, 'this Article is the most superior to all the articles'. At the end of the article the opponents were also uttering the words of everlasting truth that "now the reality of Islam has been disclosed and Islam has become victorious".

(Maqadma, The Teachings of Islam, Tab'a 1st, Matbuah London. Ref. Tarikh e Ahmadiyyat Vol.1 P. 572)

The renowned Russian thinker Count Tolstoy said about Islami Asul Ki Philosophy, "The ideas are very profound and very true".The English Mail gave this opinion in the issue of 27 th October, 1911, "A summary of really Islamic ideas".

In all these series of writings he was blessed with God Almighty's special favor and success. By mentioning it in *Izala-e-Auham* Hazoor says, in these writings God Almighty has helped me in such a way that I cannot express it, I claim it firmly that I follow the path of truth and by the Grace of God I am successful in this field and as far as I use my foresight then under my truth i.e. by following my path of truth I see the whole world progressing forward and that time is very near when I will achieve a magnificent victory because behind my voice another Voice is speaking in my favor and for the strength of my hand another Hand is working, to which the world does not see, but I am seeing. A heavenly soul is speaking in side me which gives life to my every word and every letter. Some commotion and fervor has taken place in the heavens which like a puppet have made this man of handful clay to stand up. (for the defense of Islam).

(Izala-e-Auham Roohani Khaza'in vol.3 p. 403.)

May God bless us that we ourselves should also be the ones who are fully benefitted from the pious, inspiring and life giving writings of the Imam of the age and we should also be the messengers of truth to the others

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HUMANITY FIRST

NEEDS

VOLUNTEERS AND

MONETARY DONATIONS

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PROMISED MESSIAH[as]: REFORMER OF THE AGE

Seher Chowdhry

The Holy Prophet Muhammad[saw] said: "There will be a decline in religious faith and nothing would be left of Islam except its name and nothing would be left of the Holy Qur'an except its text. Mosques though full of worshippers will be empty of guidance. The religious scholars will be the worst creation under the canopy of Heaven."

(Mishkat-ul Masabih, p.88 & Kanaz-ul Ummal, vol.6 p.43).

Behold! Behold the prediction of the Holy Prophet Muhammad[saw], foretelling a time when the world will forget what a certain Messenger of Allah had come to teach them, the initial conditions that man had put himself through for a savior to appear, the circumstances that made humanity scream out for liberation from their own savage reality. Yes, the world forgot, but then a beacon rose and those of us that recognized its significance assembled to it like moths to a flame. Once again humanity remembered its purpose, because the mists of illusion cleared to reveal the Promised Messiah and Mahdi, Hadhrat Mirza Ghulam Ahmad[as], the reformer of Islam.

The followers of the prophesied Messiah have a duty to keep him alive, not physically, but in an essence that maintains the spirituality of his teachings, because by keeping them alive we are safeguarding the teachings of the Holy Prophet Muhammad[saw]. Mainstream Muslims have strayed tragically from the God-given treasures bestowed upon us by refusing to acknowledge the gift of the Messiah, however, those with open hearts and minds need not waste the opportunity we have of utilizing this life for the benefit of our souls. Let us refer back to his writings, the very tool that won over the hearts of many.

The Holy Qur'an, a common source of Islamic teachings for all Muslims alike, the Promised Messiah[as] acknowledged that this was the reality leading to Allah, it was to save us from our sins by using its spiritual influence to shine light on our darkened lives.

"Without doubt, the living and perfect revealed Book is the one which should lead a seeker after God to his goal and, rescuing him from a low life, should lead him to the True Beloved, meeting Whom is salvation itself."

Essence of Islam - Volume 1
Page 350

The Promised Messiah[as] said salvation for seekers of the truth can be sought through the Holy Qur'an since that is the book of truth and the ultimate word of God. There is a darkness that intoxicates us, turning our society into a breeding ground for evil. No doubt we have felt the pull and have even witnessed those who succumbed to the allure of the artificial pleasures of this life, they have suffered as a result. But the Qur'an's influence however, guarantees us of something one can't ignore, the realization of what the depth of the truth is. Right now we let it go in one ear and out the other.

In volume 9 of *Roohani Khaza'in*, the Promised Messiah[as] brings our attention to verses 6 and 7 of *Surah Fatiha,"guide us on the right path, the path of those on whom Thou hast bestowed Thy blessings."* Here we have been taught to ask Allah to lead us to the path of the prophets, the path of true and dedicated people, the path of the true lovers of Allah. This is the same path followed by the Holy Prophet Muhammad[saw]. The Promised Messiah[as] acknowledged him just as much as he did the Holy Qur'an, here he writes:

أَهْدَى الْهُدَاةِ وَ أَشْجَعَ الشُّجْعَانِ

O our Full Moon, O Sign of the Gracious God!
O (you who are) the Greatest (spiritual) Guide, the Bravest among the brave.

(Taken from Al-Qaseedah)

He undoubtedly believed Prophet Muhammad[saw] was the beacon that lit the way to a better future. And so under divine guidance he knew, that his mission was to carry on what the Holy Prophet[saw] of Islam started. Mainstream Muslims had made the mistake of assuming *Jihad* with the sword was the answer, but our Messiah cleared that misconception:

Friends! Abandon the thoughts of

"Jihad" warfare now;
It is now forbidden to go to war for the sake of your faith.
The Messiah who is the religious leader of the faith has come;
Now is the end of all wars of vi lence for faith.
The light of God is now descending from heaven;
It is now futile to issue an edict for battle and fighting.
Muhammad[saw] - the Chosen Prophet - had clearly that;
When the Second Advent of Jesus Christ takes place, he would put a halt to fighting.

Roohani Khazain, Volume 17, page 77, 1902)

He introduced a message of peace to all religions, to unite them all under one banner. In his book, Message of Peace he states that a religion showing no "universal" compassion is no religion at all, just the way a human without the capability of compassion is not human. We benefit from all that He has created for us, we depend upon the elements that surround us, therefore we are to act kindly towards one another. He stressed the promotion of peace among our fellow human beings regardless of their origins, as though his life depended on it. His paper, the *Philosophy of the Teachings of Islam* silenced the opponents of Islam, for none could ever hope to match the hand of Allah. In this very paper he addressed the question of means of the attainment of man's purpose.

The first step: recognizing God Almighty for the True essence He is, to believe in Him and recognize Him correctly, for if the first step is not completed, there is no hope of moving further.

The second step: to acknowledge His beauty, appreciate all that He has done, for the heart is naturally attracted to beauty.

قُلْ هُوَ اللّٰهُ اَحَدٌ ۝ اَللّٰهُ الصَّمَدُ ۝ لَمْ يَلِدْ ۙ وَلَمْ يُوْلَدْ ۝ وَلَمْ يَكُنْ لَّهٗ كُفُوًا اَحَدٌ ۝[208]

Say, He is Allah, The One; Allah, the Independent and Besought of all. He begets not, nor is He begotten; And there is none like unto Him. (*Surah Al Ikhlas* Ch 112)

The third step: awareness of his beneficence, His attributes are expressed in Surah Al-Fatiha. It is impossible to try and count the bounties of Allah.

The fourth step: if you can accomplish the true purpose of life which is worshipping and remembering Allah then you have completed this step.

He goes on to explain more steps, which one can find in the Islamic Teachings. This paper is one of the proofs of the truth of Hadhrat Masih Mau'ood[as] as the Prophet whose coming to revive Islam in a time when the faith would decline was foretold by the Holy Prophet[saw]. His writtings, his poems, his knowledge are his own legacy to us and to those who seek truth. Our responsibility is to never forget the true teachings of Islam as revealed to the Holy Prophet[saw] and to incorporate them into our lives. The Promised Messiah and Mahdi[as] is the Reformer of the Age and the servant of the Holy Prophet Muhammad Mustafa[saw]. Following their teachings will guide us towards God Almighty.

HADITH

Hadhrat 'Uqbah bin 'Amir[ra] relates that the Messenger[saw] of Alla-h went to the graves of the martyrs of the battle of Uhud eight years after the battle and prayed as if he was saying farewell to the living and the dead. Then he ascended the pulpit and said: "I am going ahead of you, and I am a witness over you and our meeting shall be at the *Haud-e-Kauthar* (Reservoir in the Heaven). I am looking right now at the place where I will be standing. I am not worried that you will start associating partners with Allah. However, with regards to the world, I am worried about you that you may try to compete with each other for gaining the world." Hadhrat Uqbah[ra] says this was his last opportunity of looking at the Messenger[saw] of Allah.

Another narration is: "I am worried that you will compete with each other for gaining the world. Consequently, you will fight each other, which will cause your destruction like the people before you were destroyed by doing so." Hadhrat 'Uqbah[ra] says this was his last opportunity of looking at the Messenger[saw] of Allah on the pulpit. According to another narration the Messenger[sa] of Allah said: "I am going ahead of you so that I could do good for you and I am a witness over you. By Allah! I am presently looking at the Reservoir in the Heaven where I will stand. Certainly, I have been given the keys to the treasures of the world or the keys of the whole world. By Allah! I am not worried that you may become polytheists after I depart. Rather, I am worried that you may compete with each other for worldly things."

(Muslim kitabul Fada'il bab athbat h.aud. nabiyyina[sa], Bukhari kitabul maghazi

AHMADIYYAT-THE REVIVAL OF ISLAM

Mansura Bashir Minhas, Miami FL

What is Ahmadiyyat? The most succinct term that defines it is *"Nishat-e-Saniya"* that translates into 'revival of Islam'. The message of Ahmadiyyat is not novel; rather it is geared towards restoring the true essence of Islam and highlighting its inherent glory by countering the fanaticism and the misconstrued ideals that have seeped within its ranks. Hadhrat Mirza Ghulam Ahmad of Qadian[as] founded *Jama'at Ahmadiyya* in 1889 and declared that he is the Promised Reformer and Mahdi, who is being eagerly awaited by all religions. His achievements in the defense of Islam are exemplary and unparalleled. Hadhrat Masih Mau 'ood[as] declared himself to be the servant of his master, Holy Prophet Muhammad[saw] and categorically declared that the fountain of his wisdom is nourished by his true allegiance to his spiritual commander Hadhrat Muhammad[saw]. He said:

"I have come to establish the truth of Islam and to convince men of its beauty, and to lead them to the fountain of its teachings and to refresh their souls with its waters. I have brought no new law or command. The Holy Quran is the final code of Divine laws and Muhammad (on Whom be peace and blessings of God) is His last Law-bearing Prophet. I am His messenger but without a new law; and I am a Prophet but without a book; and the sole object of my advent is to serve Islam and to propagate it and to remove from its bright face the dust that has been settled there as the result of the stormy thoughts of man during the latter days."

The cataclysmic worldwide events that have unfolded lately have brought Islam in the limelight and put it center stage. Myths about Islam abound; that it is a violent religion spread by the sword, an oppressive faith that curbs the rights of women etc. Those who have a profound understanding of this beautiful faith find it disquieting, that a faith that literally means 'peace' is being misconstrued for selfish motives that are primarily political or economical.

All Muslims claim in unanimity that a Reformer and Mahdi is the need of the day; that he is destined to appear and lead Islam towards a glorious victory. Alas, they fail to realize that before reclaiming glory, they need to get their act together and comprehend what their religion merits. It is inconceivable to expect a glorious victory without fully adhering to the true values of Islam and without shedding/ condemning unapologetically the bigotry and intolerance that is rampant within their ranks.

Undeniably, Muslims overwhelmingly possess zeal and love for Islam, but they fail to budge beyond mere lip-service. Their arguments and defense constitute mere *clichés*, devoid of substance. When some resort to violence and vent their anger through aggression (when Islam is attacked), they fail to realize that such hostility is counterintuitive. The glaring contrast between the 'words' and 'actions' of radicals, fuels the hurtful myths.

While protesting the blasphemy of the Holy Prophet[saw], some Muslims commit acts that render them the blasphemers. They ignore the example of the Prophet whom they seek to defend, who was an embodiment of compassion and always exhibited extreme restraint in the face of harshest atrocities by his opponents.

Fortunately, a group of Muslims who have paid heed to the call of the Imam of age are able to make headway in this endeavor, by following the example of their Holy Prophet[saw]. The Ahmadi Muslims are fortunate to have recognized the truth; their allegiance to the Promised Messiah[as] has rendered them the true agents of change who are working tirelessly to defend Islam against the onslaught of its enemies. They are demonstrating that peace is a quintessential Islamic value that offers hope not only for the Muslims, rather for the entire world in these tumultuous times.

As Ahmadi Muslims work tirelessly in this endeavor, they incur the wrath of the hate-mongers and radicals within Islam who deem them heretics. Before Hadhrat Mirza Ghulam Ahmad[as] had claimed to be the Messiah and Mahdi, the scholars of Islam showered accolades for his services for Islam. They openly praised his defense of Islam in the face of onslaughts of attacks from

staunch Hindu and Christian leaders in British India. The Promised Messiah[as] revived the soul of Islam by injecting rationality and reason in discourse, by filtering facts from fiction and by dispelling myths. He challenged the Muslim orthodoxy and urged them to shed their ignorance and stop deceiving the masses by their harsh interpretation of Islamic jurisprudence.

To date, Ahmadi Muslims continue to progress and carry forward his message. The commonsense, moderate approach and rational rebuttal of the propaganda has allowed the message of Ahmadiyyat to gain traction. This message is essentially the true and unadulterated vision of Islam, the sole guarantor of peace in the world.

Hadhrat Khalifatul Masih V, Mirza Masroor Ahmad[aba] recently delivered numerous Friday sermons detailing the awe-inspiring accounts from the lives of the companions of the Promised Messiah[as] who immediately responded to his call and pledged their allegiance. The passion and quest for truth of these early adherents was remarkable; these soldiers of Ahmadiyyat were imbued with an extraordinary love for the Promised Messiah[as] and accepting *Bai'at* was like the most coveted treasure of their lives. These accounts are reminiscent of the deep love that the companions of the Holy Prophet[saw] exhibited for him.

History proves that such a fate is destined for all the Prophets; they invoke stark emotions in their communities. Some people are eager and willing to sacrifice all for their sake, while some remain antagonistic and demonstrate extreme hostility and aggression. The opponents are further enraged as they see the message gain traction and gain popularity.

Such has been the case with the message of the Promised Messiah[as]. Ahmadiyyat has been going strong for 124 years and it has reached the corners of the world in accordance with the prophecy of the Promised Messiah[as]. The astounding success of Ahmadiyyat is testament to the truth of the message of its founder. His advent was foretold by Allah and all signs of his coming have already been fulfilled.

Unfortunately, a large section of the Muslim world remains blinded to the truth and are in a state of denial. Their inability to contemplate beyond the literal translations of the prophecies regarding the second advent of the Messiah[as] doesn't allow then to accept the glaring signs that are apparent and mandate his arrival . They are fervently hoping that the Messiah would miraculously/suddenly descend from the heaven.

Besides *Jama'at* Ahmadiyya, there isn't any Muslim group that has formulated a formidable strategy to counter the extremism within Islam and elucidate a rebuttal to this menace. In the absence of a viable recourse, Muslims are overwhelmingly in a state of doldrums and incapable of countering the enemy within. This is due to the lack of a unified voice of reason and logic, something that Ahmadi Muslims are fortunately blessed with. For them, the *Khilafat* of the Promised Messiah[as] is their vanguard in the defense of Islam.

Pakistan has inflicted the harshest treatment on the members of *Jama'at* Ahmadiyya. By constitutionally declaring them non-Muslims, it has unleashed the gates of intolerance and bigotry. As Pakistan marginalized one of its minority communities (one that had toiled for its independence), it undertook a perilous course; consequently it finds itself struggling for its own survival. It has become a poster child of fanaticism and a headache for the entire world. Other Muslim majority countries such as Indonesia and Bangladesh are following suit and hardening their stance on Ahmadi Muslims, without realizing the grave consequences that will certainly ensue if they follow Pakistan's path.

The Pakistani government's harsh restrictions were aimed at curbing the activities of *Jama'at* Ahmadiyya in the country. However, no one can mess with the Divine plans that work in mysterious ways. When they barred *Jama'at* Ahmadiyya from freely carrying on its mission in Pakistan, Allah opened floodgates of success worldwide. Ahmadiyyat's success has been astounding and it has reached the corners of the world as was prophesized by the Promised Messiah[as].

On the political front, Pakistan's discrimination of *Jama'at* Ahmadiyya has been detrimental to its own well being. Caving in to the *Mullah's* pressure, even the secular leaders adhered to this perilous course. No leader since Muhammad Ali Jinnah has had the courage to stand up to the radicals and discourage their attempts to marginalize the

Ahmadi Muslims. Jinnah was approached by the religious zealots of that time on several occasions to discredit the efforts of the Ahmadi Muslims who had partnered with him in the establishment of Pakistan.

Politicians since then have used the Ahmadi issue as a scapegoat and an appeaser to quell the radicals. They ignored the golden principle of governance that justice has to be absolute and unconditional and all citizens must be safeguarded and guaranteed basic human rights. Even if a single minority is denied its basic rights, it can lead to grave consequences for the rest. It then becomes a matter of time before the deep-seated bigotry infiltrates and besieges the whole nation.

In the last few weeks, two heart-wrenching attacks on the Shia Hazaras in the province of Baluchistan in Pakistan have shell-shocked the nation. Nationwide protests have erupted to condemn the merciless killings of hundreds of innocent souls. As Pakistan grapples with the tragedy, very few are willing to admit that it is the same wave of bigotry against Ahmadi Muslims that had remained unchecked for too long, it has now engulfed other sections of the society.

The enemies of Ahmadiyyat, ironically, are the masterminds of the *Islamic* fundamentalism and are termed *Islamists* by the West. In these precarious times, as Muslims remain clueless and devoid of a constructive strategy to counter the attacks against Islam, the *Khilafat* of the Promised Messiah[as], Hadhrat Mirza Masroor Ahmad, Khalifatul Masih V[aba] is boldly and confidently defending Islam. The world is paying heed to his voice of reason and his recent addresses at the US Capitol and the EU Parliament in 2012 hit a chord with the Western lawmakers. Without being apologetic about Islam and its tenants, Hazoor[sba] elucidated the true doctrine of Islam regarding justice and peace. He set forth the agenda to achieve peace in the world; his wisdom stems directly from the guidelines of the Holy Qur'an and the example of the Holy Prophet[saw]. In the present era, no other leader in the Muslim world has put forth such an unambiguous and courageous stance.

The *Jama'at* Ahmadiyya's services for Islam extend beyond the rhetoric and its members are actively engaged in spreading the true mission of Islam through outstanding humanitarian endeavors and efforts to educate the world about Islam. The key to dispelling myths is to engage the Western world and inform them what Islam truly stands for. The stories of success are innumerable as *Jama'at* Ahmadiyya is carrying on the noble mission. The last few years have witnessed unprecedented achievements.

In the United States, campaigns like *Muslims for Peace*, *Muslims for Loyalty* and *Muslims for Life* have been instrumental in spreading the true message of Islam. To counter the ill effects of 9/11, Ahmadis in vast collaboration with their fellow Americans, collected thousands of units of blood and proved that they not only talked the talk rather they walked the walk, when it came down to executing Islamic values and principles that place high value on the sanctity of life.

'Innocence of Muslims' was a vile attempt to defame the Holy Prophet of Islam. While some Muslims were busy agitating and condemning this deception through aggressive measures such as rioting, looting and burning properties and effigies, Ahmadi Muslims were instructed by their *Khalifa* to counter the propaganda through sustainable and effective measures. They are busy holding conferences, distributing literature and educating non-Muslims about the true character of Hadhrat Muhammad[saw]. Such a concerted effort is the need of the time and the most befitting tribute to the Holy Prophet[saw]. The love of the Promised Messiah[as] for his Master Holy Prophet Muhammad[saw] has been passed down to his followers who are following in his footsteps. They are offering their true allegiance and demonstrating their true love through concrete, peaceful measures. They are countering hate with love; this depicts the strength of their allegiance and their reverence for the Holy Prophet[saw].

The message of the Promised Messiah[as] is the true recourse in these turbulent times. His message presents a recipe for unity among the Muslims. It is high time that Muslims shed their biases and pay heed to the call of the Imam of the Age, if they are sincere in their aspirations for the revival of Islam. The savior, the Messiah[as] has arrived and Islam's glory and ascent has been predestined by Allah under his leadership. May Allah enable us to follow the guidelines of the Promised Messiah[as] and work towards this goal. *Ameen.*

PEACE AND SALVATION THROUGH THE MESSIAH

Imam Shamshad A. Nasir

Peace and salvation: two things desperately sought by billions of human beings amidst a depressing reality of economic, social and political upheavals and what seems an unending avalanche of everything except peace and salvation. And yet, in a tantalizing divine promise of hope and redemption, all the world religions have prophesized-- and their followers fervently await -- the coming in the latter days of a divinely-appointed messiah to reform the people and usher in an era of peace and spiritual salvation.

The worldwide Ahmadiyya Muslim Community believes that the One and only God of the universe does not lie, nor does He promise something He does not deliver. It is for this reason that we believe in the prophecies of Moses[as], Jesus[as], Muhammad[saw] and other great spiritual teachers (peace be upon them all) who have all proclaimed the coming of just such a grand, unifying divine reformer and savior. The only question is: who is this person and has he come yet? Christians and most every other religious group would answer: "He is: [*insert name of expected messiah / savior / prophet here*] and he will come. We just don't know exactly when." Fair enough. Waiting is part of the prophecy deal. But what if the waiting is over and has been over for nearly 125 years? What if the expected spiritual reformer and savior already came into the world like a thief in the night and most people failed to notice?

In this great reformer's advent, God's promise of the Second Coming of Jesus (and all other Second Comings expected in other religions) was fulfilled. Equally fulfilled was the promise to all Muslims of the coming of the Imam Mahdi, or guided spiritual leader. For Islam's 1-billion Sunni Muslims, the Mahdi's advent was eagerly anticipated at the beginning of the Islamic 14thcentury – a time which aligned perfectly with the expected Second Coming of Christ within the last quarter of the 19th century. The good news for both religions is that their expectations of the coming of the Messiah and Mahdi were fully manifested in one person: Mirza Ghulam Ahmad (1835-1908) of Qadian, India. In one of his more than 80 books in defense of Islam, Ahmad stated: "I am the Light of this dark age. He who follows me will be saved from the pit which is prepared for him by Satan." Furthermore, Mirza Ghulam Ahmad[as] stated that God would show countless divine signs in favor and support of his truth and his claims, and that these signs and the passage of time would clearly set forth the true reformer from God.

A singular objection to the claims of Mirza Ghulam Ahmad is raised by both Christians and non-Ahmadi Muslims, because both believe Jesus[as] is physically alive in heaven and will return in the latter days, albeit with different and opposing missions, depending on which religion you consult. For this reason, it is important to address this objection in detail. This involves understanding who Jesus was according to Christianity and Islam, and what are the general beliefs in both religions regarding the crucifixion of Jesus. It should be remembered that the Ahmadiyya Islam interpretation is significantly different from the standard Sunni or Shia Islam view. The Ahmadiyya view will be clarified in detail later. In general, though, the following perspective is true for all denominations of Islam.

Christianity and Islam share an acknowledgment and respect for Jesus and his mother Mary, differing only in the fact that Islam -- while accepting Christ as the messiah for the Israelites -- does not accord Jesus any form of Trinitarian divinity or godhood or physical sonship as do most forms of Christianity. In that respect, Islam and Judaism are on the same page when it comes to their views on the nature and Oneness of God. Both Islam and Judaism define God as being indivisible, purely singular and completely non-corporeal, having no manifestations as God in the flesh in either human or animal form. As these were pagan religious beliefs, it is easy to see why they are universally condemned in Judaic and Islamic scriptures, and why such pagan beliefs are never advocated by Jesus himself.

As Jesus[as] is a holy figure common to and revered in both Islam and Christianity, let me explain the Ahmadiyya Muslim take on Jesus[as]. We believe Jesus was the Israelite messiah sent by God 2,000 years ago to "gather

the Lost Sheep of the House of Israel" which he states in Matthew 15:24 to be his only mission.

To Ahmadi Muslims, it is unthinkable that he could fail in that mission -- that God would not deliver him from his enemies but instead let him die on the cross as an accursed imposter and proven liar in his claim of being God's messiah for the Israelites. This is precisely why his opponents wanted him crucified in the first place – to prove he was a false messiah! It is the main reason the Jews did not accept him. They even tell him when he is on the cross that if he comes down off it, they will believe in him. It is only later interpretations of the event by Paul and Pauline Christians that transforms the purported death of Jesus on the cross from being a sign of his failure to the sole reason for his advent! The only difference between the standard Muslim and Christian beliefs about Jesus is that non-Ahmadi Muslims believe Jesus was never put on the cross at all –thereby rescuing him from an "accursed" death -- but was instead miraculously raised bodily alive by God to heaven the night before the crucifixion. Another person (usually said to be Judas) was then made to resemble Jesus and it was this other person who was mistakenly arrested by the Romans, tried before Pontius Pilate (without once complaining that they had the wrong man) and then crucified instead of Jesus.

The other major difference between the Christian and Muslim versions of Jesus[as] pertains to what he will be doing once he comes back down in his same physical body after 2,000 years. To the Christians, Jesus[as] will be coming back to gather the faithful who believe in him and to "judge the quick and the dead" – presumably resulting in the dispensing of divine punishment to anyone who doesn't believe in him as their Savior and as God incarnate and/or the literal Son of God. If you take Luke 19:27 at face value, Jesus commands that all those who will not have him reign over them as their king be brought before him and put to death at his feet.

The Muslim version isn't much different except that Jesus will be a Muslim when he comes back – even though the Qur'an defines him as an Israelite messiah under the Mosaic Law – and the victims of his bloody wrath will be the Christians, the Jews and presumably everyone else who won't convert to Islam at the point of the sword or the barrel of an AK-47.

The Ahmadiyya Muslim belief is that God sends prophets and messiahs as physicians for the soul, commissioned to cure the spiritually sick. All those who thirst for God's truth and healing are drawn to such divinely-guided fountains of reformation and redemption, and are thus rewarded with a new spiritual rebirth. This has always been the way God works in the world to save mankind. For this reason, Ahmadi Muslims do not believe that Jesus died an accursed death on the cross, nor do we believe that Jesus[as] is God or the literal son of God or that he was raised bodily alive to heaven. Jesus[as] is certainly in heaven, but his body is here on earth. In fact, there is ample evidence to support the contention that Jesus[as] is buried in a Jewish-style sepulcher in Srinagar, Kashmir, where he was finally laid to rest after spending decades working to fulfill his mission to gather and preach to the Lost Sheep of Israel. (To learn more, go online to:www.TombofJesus.com. Also, go to YouTube and type in "10 Lost Tribes" and"Jesus in India" to see 75,000 entries combined on these two subjects alone. And watch the BBC video "Did Jesus Die?")

As much as it may pain most Christians and Muslims, no one will ever see Jesus[as] physically return to earth in his Second Coming for exactly the same reason the prophet Elijah never physically returned to earth in his Second Coming. Jesus made it clear to all who would listen that second advents occur metaphorically through other people, explaining that John the Baptist was the spiritual return of Elijah. In exactly the same way, the spiritual return of Jesus has already happened through Mirza Ghulam Ahmad[as], who founded the Ahmadiyya Muslim Community on March 23rd, 1889. He came as a thief in the night, yet his advent started a movement of spiritual reform and regeneration within Islam that has reached 202 countries and attracted tens of millions of devoted followers from all walks of life and virtually every religious and philosophical persuasion. The unifying ideas of Islam are simple: God is purely One, there is none worthy of worship except God, Muhammad is the messenger of God, and the Holy Qur'an is God's final and complete guidance for all mankind. Mirza Ghulam Ahmad, the Promised Messiah and Imam Mahdi[as], came to reignite these truths in the hearts of Muslims and all mankind. These truths are epitomized in the Ahmadiyya Muslim Community motto, which all sincere members strive to embody: "Love for All – Hatred for None."

GENDER EQUALITY IN ISLAM: MYTH OR REALITY?

Rafi Ahmed, Ph.D.

Prologue

When I am asked about the question of gender equality in Islam, I reply that there is a short answer and a long answer. However, people insist that only the short answer be given. But the short answer – whether it is affirmative or negative – can be misleading. Therefore, the long answer will be addressed first here.

Before gender equality in Islam is discussed, a bit of perspective will surely be useful. Throughout recorded history, women have been dehumanized, dispossessed, diminished, degraded, marginalized, disenfranchised, secluded, subjugated, and silenced. [1]

In ancient India, widows were forced to be burnt alive on the pyre of their dead husbands.

In pre-Islamic Arabia, female infants were buried alive. Female infanticide still occurs in many countries.

In England, prior to the enactment of the Married Women's Property Act of 1882, any income earned or any property inherited by a woman automatically became the property of her husband. Around that time, John Stuart Mill, the preeminent British political scientist, wrote that "In this respect the wife's position under the common law of England is worse than that of slaves ..." [2] Similar conditions prevailed in France before 1930.

Under the Pakistani *hudood* ordinances enacted in 1977, a woman who brings charges of rape is asked to produce four Muslim male eye-witnesses of the incident, and if she fails to produce the witnesses, she is charged and punished for the crime of adultery. [3]

In 2002, the Saudi religious police forced fleeing young girls back into a blazing school building in Mecca, because the girls had not put on their *abāyas*.

In 2007, the Egyptian government reported that *96* percent of women in that country undergo forced genital mutilation. [4]

According to a US governmental survey of 2011, over 18% of women in the US have been raped at some time in their lives. [5]

And recently, we learnt with horror about the Taliban's near-fatal attack on a fifteen-year-old Pakistani girl for the "crime" of championing the cause of women's education. [6]

The list of enormities against women is long and excruciating. But their rationalizations are even worse.

Innate Equality

Social conditions and prevailing cultural values play a crucial role in the perception of what gender equality means. So let us ask: Are men and women equal? Or are some more equal than others? Are men and women equal in intellectual abilities? Or are there innate differences? These are sensitive questions, but critical ones, since demands for equal rights and opportunities presuppose equal abilities.

In 2005, Laurence Summers, then president of Harvard University, publicly wondered whether women have the same innate abilities in mathematical sciences as men. [7]

The bitter-sweet irony of this insinuation [8] is that the recent accomplishments of women have raised the bar so high that now it can be settled *only* by comparing original contributions made at the highest level of mathematical sciences.

On the one hand, only 13 women have been awarded Nobel prizes in science so far [9] But on the other hand, a total of 12 men of Chinese, Indian, Pakistani, and Arab origins have received the Nobel prizes in science. [9] For either of these two groups, the small numbers cannot be attributed to innate differences in ability. Research in this area has identified important cultural and societal factors such as lack of opportunity, role models, and motivation that seem to explain such under accomplishment.

In recent years, American universities awarded 27% of PhDs in

mathematics to women. [10] Women now form 20% of the MIT faculty. [11] The mathematically precocious girl to boy ratio is currently 1-to-2.8, an almost five-fold increase during the last two decades. [12]

Let us put this in perspective. We still live in a man's world. But the women's movements have made significant contributions towards raising consciousness. It is only during the latter half of the last century that women started going for higher education in any significant number. The gap between male and female representation in the physical sciences is being constantly narrowed.

The Qur'anic Principle

In the Islamic worldview, biological differences between men and women are recognized and the supreme virtue of motherhood is extolled, but for the Qur'an biology is *not* destiny.

The Holy Qur'an expresses the moral and spiritual equality of men and women by balancing virtues and rewards for both genders in identical terms.

Surely, men who submit themselves *to God* and women who submit themselves *to Him*, and believing men and believing women, and obedient men and obedient women, and truthful men and truthful women, and men steadfast *in their faith* and steadfast women, and men who are humble and women who are humble, and men who give alms and women who give alms, and men who fast and women who fast, and men who are chaste and women who are *chaste*, and men and women who remember Allah much – Allah has prepared for *all of* them forgiveness and a great reward. [33:36]

The ethical qualities enumerated by the Qur'n for both men and women also have social and political dimensions with far reaching implications.

It is remarkable that the Qur'an makes absolutely no statements about the inherent ethical or intellectual superiority of men over women. On the contrary, it says:

O mankind, We have created you from a male and a female; and We have made you tribes and sub-tribes that you may know one another. Verily, the most honorable among you, in the sight of Allah, is the one who is the most righteous among you. Surely, Allah is All-Knowing, All-Aware. [49: 14]

The Holy Prophet Muhammad[saw] echoed the same principles of equality and egalitarianism in his last sermon.

All of you are equal. Even as the fingers of the two hands are equal, so are human beings equal to one another. No one has any claim of superiority over another. The most honored among you in the sight of God is the most righteous among you. [13]

Most of us have heard the Holy Prophet's[saw] last sermon hundreds of time – but rarely, it would appear, in the context of gender equality.

But one of the central messages of the sermon is that 'the content of our character' – to borrow a phrase from Dr. King – not the configuration of our chromosomes that matters.

Imparities

Nevertheless, the Qur'an has prescribed different rights and obligations for men and women under some specific conditions. Let us examine some of these Qur'anic differences.

The commandment for the *hijab* is given in two verses (24:31, 33:60) in the Qur'an; neither explicitly prescribes covering of the face. The Qur'an commands both men and women to restrain their eyes and guard their chastity, but it requires women to wear a head covering or an outer garment to prevent them from being treated as mere sex objects. Further, the specific Qur'anic command (33:44) for sequestering the wives of the Holy Prophet[saw] is not to be applied to all believing women.

The system of the *hijab* or *purdah* – which comprises a wide spectrum of practices – is seen in the West as emblematic of gender inequality and as a tool for the seclusion and subjugation of women. This perception is often based on the way *purdah* is practiced in Muslim countries. However, Dannenbaum [14] found that some women find the *hijab* liberating and noted that there is an element of cultural imperialism in the West's criticism of the hijab that does not result in segregation.

Germaine Greer, a prominent feminist, observed [15]: "What more could women want? Freedom; freedom from being looked at; ... freedom from self-consciousness; freedom from the duty of sexual stimulation of jaded male appetite; freedom from the uncomfortable clothes that must be worn to titillate ... Now it is even more important to underline women's right to reject male advances ... and the right to chastity." This observation, although coming unexpectedly

from a feminist, underscores the spirit of the *hijab*.

Many believe that the verse (2:283) relating to witnessing financial transactions imply that two females are equivalent to one male. But according to Hadhrat Khalifatul-Masih IV[rh] [16] and Hadhrat Zafrulla Khan[ra]. [17] the provision is concerned only with the preservation of evidence and not with the weight to be attached to the testimony. Nor can this provision be generalized beyond the specified scope of financial transactions.

The Qur'an (2:229, 4:35) describes respective roles of a married couple and says that husbands and wives have rights in equitable reciprocity, but the husband has a supervisory role in the marriage, since he is responsible for the financial upkeep of the family. However, the supervisory role is limited in legal terms. Furthermore, this relative difference of roles cannot be used to deduce an inferior civil and legal position for women.

In the Islamic inheritance laws, the share of a female is half of her male sibling. Clearly, the amounts of inheritance for men and women, in general, are unrelated. The difference in the share is explained by the greater financial responsibility given to men. Nonetheless, other inequalities cannot be deduced from the inheritance law. It is evident that the specific and well-defined imparities in the Qur'an cannot be – and must not be – construed to sanction a universal gender inequality.

Islam – The Emancipator of Woman

Hadhrat Khalifatul Masih II[ra] described the status of women before the advent of Islam.

"Before the advent of the Holy Prophet[saw] women in all countries were in the position of slave and chattels, and their slavery could not but have affected adversely even on men." [1]

When we ponder upon the wisdom contained in these words, we realize that the subjugation of women leads to the suppression of men's minds.

Hadhrat Khalifatul Masih II[ra] continues:

"The Holy Prophet[saw] declared that God has particularly entrusted him with the task of safeguarding the rights of women. He proclaimed in the name of God that man and woman by virtue of their humanity were equal to each other." [1]

Islam presented a revolutionary concept. It emancipated woman. It gave woman the right to inherit property. It gave her the right to own and manage it individually and independently. It gave her the right to seek dissolution of her marriage and remarry, if she wished. Fourteen centuries ago, Islam gave the woman an independent legal status.

The Holy Prophet[saw] promoted education and welfare of woman. The Holy Prophet[saw] declared that "it was *incumbent* upon every Muslim man and every Muslim woman to acquire knowledge". He commanded that "the rights of women are sacred; see to it that the rights of women are granted to them."

Paul Findley, a U.S. Congressman, who studied Islamic history, wrote that "Islam may be the single most liberating influence on the status of women in recorded history." [18]

The Medieval Mindset

However, over the centuries, many evils crept back into Muslim societies, as indigenous cultural values, patriarchal traditions, dormant misogyny, and the power dynamics between genders reasserted themselves in the guise of religious orthodoxy. This retrogressive trend has been correctly attributed to "the medieval-minded Muslim clergy" in the succinct phrase [16] of Hadhrat Khalifatul Masih IV[rh].

In his book *The Revival of the Religious Knowledge,* Al-Ghazālī, an influential Muslim theologian, advocated [19] that women be kept ignorant: "She must not be well-informed nor must she be taught to write. She should stay at home. ... If you relax the woman's leash a tiny bit, she will take you and bolt wildly. ... Their deception is awesome; their guile is immense and contagious. Wickedness and feeble mind are their predominant traits."

Ghazali, who lived in the 11[th] century, is a typical example of the medieval-minded clergy. But even today, the medieval mindset remains at large. An article [6] in *the Review of Religions* accurately analyzed the workings of the medieval-mindset trapped in the 21[st] century: "Women's empowerment is a threat to their ideology, and whilst attempting to obliterate any attempts that jeopardize their established dogma, they cite 'Islam' as a way of justifying it."

In order to perpetuate patriarchy – the structure of male authority – the medieval mindset insists on perceiving women exclusively in relation to their male relatives. In this view, the woman does not have any independent existence or identity – she is almost a possession, often an adversary, invariably an ancillary, always a derived entity. In their relentless pursuit of fundamental gender inequality, the medieval-minded clergy inverts the relationship between the Qur'an and the *Hadith* by using unreliable ahadith to override the Qur'an.

A *Hadith* from *Tirmidhi (Kitab-un-Nikah)* is often quoted to support blatant inequality between husbands and wives. In that hadith, the Holy Prophet[saw] is *alleged* to have said: "If I were to order someone to prostrate before any other human being, I would order women to prostrate before their husbands."

This hadith, which was rejected by both *Bukhari* and *Muslim*, contradicts the sole Qur'anic criterion for honor. Let us set aside for a moment the entirely un-Islamic question of prostration to humans and consider. If preeminence is to be established and obeisance is to be paid, it stands to reason that obeisance must be paid by an impious husband to his pious wife – *not vice versa.*

The Ahmadiyya Reform

After centuries of moral decline and medieval-minded thinking, the modern age needed a new mission that renews the moral and spiritual revolution of the Holy Prophet[saw] – that is the mission of the Promised Messiah[as] and of his *Khalifas.*

The Promised Messiah[as] gave the golden rule that rectifies the inverted relationship by using the Qur'an as *the* touchstone for the hadith.

"It is a fact that there exist a large number of fabricated *Ahadith*, which have caused a great deal of disruption in Islam. ... If there is a *Hadith* which stands in contradiction of what has been stated in the Qur'an, you should exercise your reasoning to reconcile its interpretation, but where no such reconciliation is possible, the *Hadith* should be rejected and thrown aside, since it cannot be taken to have come from the Holy Prophet[saw]. [20]

More than a century ago, the Promised Messiah[as] made an observation about the permissibility and scope of pre-nuptial agreement. It is a statement far ahead of its time and quite in accord with the demands of justice.

"Women have the right to lay down the condition that the husband will, under no circumstances whatsoever, marry another woman. If this condition is laid down before marriage, the husband will be guilty of breach of contract, if he goes on to marry another. ... If the first wife feels that her right as a wife will be placed in jeopardy by the second marriage of her husband, she can seek a way out by demanding a divorce; and should the husband be unwilling to comply with her demand, she can enforce separation through the court." [21]

Hadhrat Khalifatul Masih IV[rh] wrote about the true concept of gender segregation.

"Segregation is grossly misunderstood when it is conceived as an imposition or restriction on female members of the Muslim society from fully participating in all spheres of human activities. This is not true." [16]

In other words, *purdah* must not be allowed to create an impediment to women's full participation in all honorable areas of human activities.

Hadhrat Khalifatul Masih II[ra] made an observation about the status of women in Islam.

"Women, in short, were to have an independent status. All the spiritual rewards were open to her. ... Even in this life she could take part in the different departments of civil administration. In this regard, she was to have the same consideration paid to her as that accorded to man." [1]

Hadhrat Khalifatul Masih IV[ra] noted the contributions of Islam.

"The status of women was raised to such a high standard that they could not be treated as helpless commodities. They were given an equal share in the affairs of life. Whereas previously they were distributed as chattels of inheritance, now they could inherit estates of their fathers. They could also stand up to their husbands and talk back to them. They could reason with them and, of course, had the full right to disagree." [16]

The key phrase here is "*an equal share in the affairs of life*".

Describing the Ahmadiyya Centenary (1989) speech of Hadhrat Khalifatul Masih IV[rh], Ian Adamson wrote [22]: "The *Khalifa* emphasized that he wanted women as doctors,

architects, lawyers, teachers and engineers as well as men. Women had not only equal rights in Islam, they had special rights." This wish of Hadhrat Khalifatul Masih IV[rh] seems to have come true in the U.S., where women excel in many areas [23].

Epilogue

It is essential to understand that – no matter how noble and egalitarian some principles may be – the social conditions must be right for those principles to be implemented. For example, the right of a Muslim woman to own and manage her property independently of her husband empowers her by establishing her independent financial and legal position. But if society or the community does not create the conditions for her to acquire and use the skills to manage it, then that God-given right is effectively revoked by the society. So is gender equality in Islam a myth or reality? The short answer to this question, long overdue, must be given in conclusion. It is what *we* make it to be.

The Holy Qur'an proclaims, "There is no doubt that it is a perfect book, and guidance for the righteous" [2:3]. May we be guided by the Holy Qur'an in building a fair community and a just society, where women and men are given fundamental equality, full responsibility, all the opportunity, and true dignity.

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Author

Rafi Ahmed is a computer scientist, who has published over 25 research papers in peer-reviewed journals. He is the inventor of 17 U.S. patents. His articles have appeared in an encyclopedia and database system text books. He has given invited talks at international conferences and academia.

He serves as the assistant national education secretary of AMC, USA. He regularly speaks and writes on theological subjects. His articles have appeared in the Ahmadiyya Gazette USA, the Review of Religions, and on www.alislam.org.

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CONCUBINES AND THE HOLY QUR'AN

Dr. Khaula Rehman Shah

And forbidden to you are married women, except such as your right hands possess. This has Allah enjoined on you. And allowed to you are those beyond that, that you seek them by means of your property, marrying them properly and not committing fornication. And for the benefit you receive from them, give them their dowries, as fixed, and there shall be no sin for you in anything you mutually agree upon, after the fixing of the dowry. Surely, Allah is All-Knowing, Wise. (4:25)

There is no truth to the claim that Islam contributed to concubinage and slavery. These institutes existed long before the advent of Islam. The practice was wide spread in Roman and Persian empires, in Greece and Egypt, and pre-Islamic Arabian Peninsula. Slaves and concubines were an integral part of their social and economic system.

The extent and prevalence of slavery in the Roman Empire can be judged from a comment of Prof. Elaine Pagels, of Princeton University, in the PBS documentary, titled "From Jesus to Christ: the early Christians." She says that at the time of Jesus, in the Roman Empire, "three quarters of the population consisted of slaves."

According to Encyclopedia Britannica 30 to 40 percent of population was enslaved in Roman Italy between 2nd century BC and 4th century AD.

The Islamic way of gradual emancipation of slaves and stressing on marriage of female slaves was important. Sudden and universal liberation of hundreds of thousands of them would have exercised a corrupting influence on their morals and habits. They were physically and mentally dependent on their masters, sometimes for generations, and had no means of supporting themselves. One can imagine what havoc sudden emancipation would have created in the society.

The Holy Prophet[saw] proved to be a true Reformer and brought moral, social and economic uplift among slaves and took effective steps so that this neglected part of the society could gradually become fit to lead independent and useful lives.

According to Encyclopedia Britannica, "Concubinage is the state of cohabitation of a man and a woman without the full sanctions of legal marriage. ... In Roman law concubinage was the permanent cohabitation of a man and a woman outside of their existing formal marriages. The partners in such relationships and the offspring of their union did not have the same legal rights accorded married persons and their legitimate children."

In the Roman Empire the title of concubine was not considered derogatory and was often inscribed on tombstones. This was different from the current Western laws that do not acknowledge any legal status of concubines. Today the law only admits monogamous marriages. Any other relationship does not enjoy any legal protection. Early Roman law sought to differentiate between the status of concubinage and legal marriage. Emperor Augustus' Leges Juliae gave the first legal recognition of concubinage, defining it as cohabitation without marital status. Concubines widely failed to hail much protection under law, aside the legal recognition of their social stature.

This historical perspective led Westerners to misunderstand Islam. The term concubinage is a Judeo-Christian term. The Qur'anic term is 'what your right hands possess.' This term has been used in Qur'an in preference to slaves or bond women to point out that these women are under the care of Muslims and should not be mistreated. As we know, the right hand has its special merit and privileged functions that humans instinctively reserve for it.

There is no truth to the claim that conjugal relationships are allowed in Islam, if outside the bond of marriage. The Holy Qur'an has explained that the object of marriage is to protect one from moral and physical diseases, thus Muslims are not allowed to gratify their passions outside the domain of marriage.

The Chapter *Nisa* of the Holy Qur'an details the blood relationships that believers are forbidden to marry. It says,

"Forbidden to you are your

mothers, and your daughters, and your sisters, and your fathers' sisters, and your mothers' sisters, and brother's daughters, and sister's daughters, and your foster-mothers that have given you suck, and your foster-sisters, and the mothers of your wives, and your stepdaughters, who are your wards by your wives unto whom you have gone in — but if you have not gone in unto them, there shall be no sin upon you — and the wives of your sons that are from your loins; and it is forbidden to you to have two sisters together in marriage, except what has already passed; surely, Allah is Most Forgiving, Merciful." (4:24)

The very next verse describes the issue under discussion,

"And forbidden to you are married women, except such as your right hands possess. This has Allah enjoined on you. And allowed to you are those beyond that, that you seek them by means of your property, marrying them properly and not committing fornication. And for the benefit you receive from them, give them their dowries, as fixed, and there shall be no sin for you in anything you mutually agree upon, after the fixing of the dowry. Surely, Allah is All-Knowing, Wise." (4:25)

By relating these two verses one can immediately understand the Islamic teachings on the issue of concubines (your right hands possess). Although concubines did loose certain rights as prisoners of war, the Qur'an in this verse is only referring to them within the context of marriage. The verse that follows these two, further confirms the above inference that unlike the Roman law or Judeo-Christian tradition there is no permission for conjugal relationships in Islam outside marriage,

"And whoso of you cannot afford to marry free, believing women, let him marry what your right hands possess, namely, your believing handmaids. And Allah knows your faith best; you are all one from another; so marry them with the leave of their masters and give them their dowries according to what is fair, they being chaste, not committing fornication, nor taking secret paramours." (4:26)

The prior marriages of the concubines or the prisoners of war, who could not negotiate freedom, were annulled, but no conjugal relationship was allowed in the Muslim society without marrying them under all of the terms and conditions that any other woman would be wed. So profound was the effect of the teaching of chastity in Islam that some of the companions wanted the Holy Prophet to give them permission to practice celibacy. But the Holy Prophet[saw] refused that because he wanted Muslims to follow the golden mean. The accusation that the Holy Prophet[saw] and his companions indulged in self gratification with the concubines, by the West, is totally alien to the teachings and spirit of Islam. Only those who are ignorant of the teachings of Islam or who have evil motives against Islam make such claims.

In the time of the Holy Prophet[saw] the hostile nations used to wage religious wars against Islam to destroy it and to compel Muslims to abandon their religion at the point of sword. They used to enslave Muslim men and women and used to treat them in horrific and inhumane manner. Muslim women were captured and were treated as bondwomen and concubines. They used to particularly declare their determination to capture and enslave pious Muslim women and enter into conjugal relations with them.

Thus, the Islamic injunction to take prisoners of war was just a retaliatory measure. It was necessary to deter the enemies from their excesses. As women also participated in wars and in some cases in actual fighting, there was no reason that these women should have been exempted from imprisonment. After all, if it is lawful for every nation and every country to imprison women for criminal offences then why not warrior women should be taken captive in the battle field?

In the seventh century there were no state prisons so these prisoners were distributed among Muslims and used to live in their houses. Muslims were responsible for providing shelter, food and clothing for them. The Holy Prophet's[saw] teaching was to take good care of them, to treat them humanely, give them same treatment as you would like for yourself and create every possibility for them to earn their freedom. Both male and female prisoners were provided equal opportunities, to obtain their freedom. The Holy Prophet[saw] safeguarded their rights. If anybody would commit a sin he had to free a slave to repent. If anybody would treat a slave unjustly or beat him or her, he had to free the slave.

Right from the beginning, Islam

worked on gradual and complete abolition of slavery. The Qur'an laid down following principals for abolition of slavery:

1. Prisoners can only be taken during a regular Battle.

2. They cannot be retained after the War is over.

3. They are to be set free either as a mark of favor or by exchange of prisoners or by paying ransom.

4. To obtain freedom, prisoners of war could enter into a civil written contract with his or her master, irrespective of the fact whether master liked it or not, which is known as '*mukatabat*' (deed of manumission). After this contract slave is free to earn the ransom in any legitimate means he or she likes, to get the freedom.

Encyclopedia Britannica acknowledges this attitude of the early Islamic societies towards emancipation of slaves, talking about manumission it states, "An obvious example is provided by the Old Testament law that Hebrew slaves were to be manumitted after six years (Exodus 21:2; Deuteronomy 15:12). A similar general recommendation that slaves be freed after six years in bondage was adhered to by many Islamic slave-owning societies; ... In Christian slave societies, on the other hand, the principle that the tenure of slavery should be limited was almost completely ignored."

Only those females who were somehow not able to get their freedom by above means or chose to stay with Muslims, were to be married and this was specially stressed by the Holy Qur'an. This permission to marry them secured freedom for female captives and their children. It prevented them from prostitution and becoming concubines, in the Judeo-Christian sense of the word. This provided them hope and dignity. This made men responsible for taking care of them. A free man was allowed to marry these female slaves even if by doing so the prescribed limit of maximum of four wives was exceeded.

The Holy Prophet[saw] was very explicit that female slaves and female prisoners of war should be given good education and upbringing. He is reported to have said, "He who has a slave girl and gives her proper education and brings her up in a becoming manner and then frees her and marry her, for him is double reward." This implies that if a Muslim wants to marry a slave girl he should first free her and then marry her.

The Holy Prophet's[saw] own practice was quite in harmony with this admonition. Two of the Holy Prophet's[saw] wives, Jawariya and Saffiya came to him as prisoners of War. He married them according to the Islamic Law. Another wife, Maria, was sent to him by the King of Egypt as an offering. He granted her freedom and marriage and she enjoyed the status of a free wife like other wives and was known as "mother of the faithful."

Hadhrat Mirza Tahir Ahmad, Khalifatul Masih IV[rh] stated: "The teachings of slavery and marriage of prisoners are no longer applicable in this day and age. If one would question, as to why the law of Islam, gives with regard to one and same matter, one commandment for one time, and another commandment for another, the answer is that it is a merit rather than a demerit. Hadhrat Mirza Bashir Ahmad[ra] explains this in his book *Islam and Slavery*:

"If we carefully consider this matter, we shall find that this very circumstance is an evidence of the Law of Islam being a perfect and a universal one, for it shows that in the Islamic law, the change of circumstances has been fully taken into consideration. This is why that while some laws which form the basis of the Islamic code have been laid down in a rigid form which admits of no alteration, there are other commandments which have either been given in alternative forms in the view of changing conditions or which, having been made flexible, admit of new but valid interpretations under different circumstances."

He concludes his argument by referring to this verse of the Holy Qur'an:

"Allah it is Who has sent down to thee the Book; in it there are verses that are decisive in meaning — they are the basis of the Book — and there are others that are susceptible of different interpretations. But those in whose hearts is perversity pursue such thereof as are susceptible of different interpretations, seeking discord and seeking wrong interpretation of it. And none knows its right interpretation except Allah...."

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Al Qur'an 3:8.

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SISTER NASIRA SALEEMA RAZAA

(1927 -2013)

It is with a heavy heart, that I inform you that Sister Nasira S. Razaa, a longtime Zion Jama'at member, who had been suffering from a chronic illness, has passed away surrounded by family members in Kentucky.

Inna lillahi wa Inna Ilaihi raji'un

Nasira S. Razaa was born in St. Louis, Missouri on April 13, 1927, to the parents (deceased), Eloise Fonville (Tahira Rasheeda), and Ira Wall. Her father was a Baptist minister. Nasira was married to Ali Razaa in 1951, and remained his devoted wife until his death in 1996. She is a mother of 9 children and 22 or more grandchildren. She worked for the United States Postal Service in Kenosha Wisconsin from 1966 -1972. She also was employed by the United States Army as a Military Postal Locator from 1979-1989.

She claimed no previous religion before accepting Islam (Ahmadiyyat). She was interested in Yoga and Buddhism but didn't pursue it. She studied Ahmadiyyat under her late husband Ali Razaa and converted to Islam in August 1949, at the hand of Khalil Ahmad Nasir, Missionary-in-Charge, USA.

Sister Nasira and her late husband Ali made a tremendous contribution to Ahmadiyyat. Respected Hasan Hakeem Sahib, President Zion *Jama'at* was converted by her husband. Their home was a magnet for young people seeking to learn Ahmadiyyat. The Razaa family is a legacy in three states, Missouri, Illinois and Wisconsin.

She enjoyed a special relationship with *Hazoor-e-Anwer* and she visited with him during his Zion visit in 2012.

I. H. Kauser
Imam Midwest Region

MARTIN LUTHER KING JR DAY PARTICIPATION

Waqas Malik, Seattle, WA

Ahmadiyya Muslim Community Seattle has been participating in the annual Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. celebrations for many years. This year the community was given an opportunity to address the attendees of the celebrations. Hasan Hakeem, the National *Tabligh* Secretary, addressed a packed auditorium of about 800 guests at the Lynnwood Convention Center on January 17th, 2013. In his comments Hasan Hakeem drew parallels between the visions of Dr. King and the Prophet of Islam[saw]. The profound difference between the two visions was that they were apart by a span of 1400 years. While Dr. King fought for equality in the recent times the Prophet of Islam championed it over 1400 years ago. Hasan Hakeem mentioned that he was profoundly moved by Dr. King's speech about Vietnam. He then quoted the farewell sermon delivered by Holy Prophet[saw]: "... an Arab has no superiority over a non-Arab nor a non-Arab has any superiority over an Arab; also a white has no superiority over black nor a black has any superiority over white ...", and explained that Islam teaches equality among all races. Hasan Hakeem's address was very well received with several of the attendees expressing their gratitude to Hasan Hakeem. The organizer of the event expressed her feelings as follows:

We were so pleased to have your participation and the Chaplain (Hassan Hakeem) was a wonderful addition to the celebration.and Thanks for all your efforts! Julie Moore l Community Outreach Specialist

Pictures available here:
https://picasaweb.google.com/116141473741692496910/LynnwoodMLKDayJan172013 and https://picasaweb.google.com/116141473741692496910/SeattleMLKDayJan212013

The Seattle *Jama'at* was also able to participate in the Nation's largest celebration which was held in the city of Seattle. On January 21st, 2013 Rasheed Reno of Seattle *Jama'at* addressed a rally of about 5000 attendees. Rasheed Reno in his speech expressed that Dr. King's struggles for equality were noble and there was an uncanny similarity with the teachings of Islam. Rasheed Reno quoted Dr. King

"We have inherited a big house, a great "world house" in which we have to live together - black and white, Easterners and Westerners, Gentiles and Jews, Catholics and Protestants, Moslem and Hindu, a family unduly separated in ideas, culture, and interests who, because we can never again live without each other, must learn, somehow, in this one big world, to live with each other." And explained how we live as global family. Further Rasheed Reno quoted verse 14 of chapter 49: "O mankind, We have created you from a male and a female; and We have made you into tribes and sub-tribes that you may recognize one another. Verily, the most honorable among you, in the sight of Allah, is he who is the most righteous among you. Surely, Allah is All-knowing, All-Aware."

Rasheed explained that this verse establishes that our ethnic and national backgrounds are merely a means of identification and they in no way establish any superiority. Quoting from Dr. King's I have a dream speech "I have a dream that my four little children will one day live in a nation where they will not be judged by the color of their skin, but by the content of their character." Rasheed explained how the Holy Prophet (SAW) gave the same advice to his followers at the farewell address.

"My favorite quote of Dr King is 'there is some good in the worst of us and some evil in the best of us. When we discover this, we are less prone to hate our enemies.' Until we can begin to look beyond each other's short comings and realize that we have weaknesses of our own, we will not be able to forgive others and get past the feelings of hate and resentment ..." expounded Rasheed.

Rasheed Reno's address was also very well received and several members of the audience expressed their gratitude afterwards.

MY GRANDFATHER: A BEARER OF GLAD TIDINGS AND A BLESSED LIGHT

Zahir Muhammad Mannan

Death finds us all but rarely does life find one zestfully in love with the Divine who makes a lasting difference. My grandfather was that resplendent treasure. His name was Dr. Basharat Munir Mirza and he made the impossible possible! A real renaissance man whose expertise revolutionized nuclear physics, politics, theology, human beings, organizations and beyond! Zealously yet quietly serving God and others, he asked for nothing except his Lord, to Whom he belonged, and to Whom he returned last *Jumu'ah* Friday, (Feb. 8.)

It would be impossible to mention every impossibility my grandfather conquered. To give you only a crumb's taste of his life here are a highlighted few: he was beckoned to the United States in 1961 to join Ohio State University as an associate professor in physics. Here he conducted pioneering research at Brookhaven National Lab for eleven years. Being ever-inclined to serving the fast-growing spiritual movement of the latter-day Messiah, the first thing he did was expand the Ahmadiyya Muslim Community (AMC) by establishing a new chapter in Athens, Ohio. He single-handedly founded America's first Muslim Printing Press called the Fazl-i-Umar Press. It has been instrumental in printing and mailing various Ahmadiyya Muslim publications for almost five decades. Through this novel asset the oldest Muslim publication in America, The Muslim Sunrise, was revived after its transient death, and became America's longest running Muslim periodical. Together, Missionary Abdul Rahman Bengalee and my grandfather were chosen as Editors in 1964. Under the guidance of the holy 3rd Successor of the Awaited Messiah, my grandfather originated the Fazl-i-Umar Research Institute a year later in the same town. This unique institute produced its own monthly research periodical entitled "Particles and Nuclei" whose illustrious circle of contributors included the world renowned Nobel Laureate Dr. Abdus Salam. All Ahmadiyya Muslim printings and publications henceforth were funded entirely by the Fazl-i-Umar Research Institute and mailed out personally by my grandfather until his demise. In 1972, he resigned from his tenure as an esteemed Professor at Ohio State University to focus solely on winning God's pleasure through His service and that of His creatures.

In 1990, he started a food pantry and ran a soup kitchen for the town of Chauncey. In 1991, he helped the Athens County Adult Education program that was about to be eliminated but miraculously kept it running. At that time, he received an honorific letter from the Ohio House of Representatives commending him as a "remarkable individual, combining civic concern and commitment with selfless initiative to become a dynamic leader." Noting his services in terms of giving of his time, energy, and resources, the letter said, "We commend you for your dedicated service to the community and salute you as one of Ohio's finest citizens." In 1994, he and his wife moved to Chauncey transforming the Old Chauncey High School into their residence. Here he turned his attention to helping the people of Chauncey. In 2007, he was elected to the town council for a four-year term. In 2008 and again in 2009, he was elected as the President of the town council for one-year terms, for two consecu-

2008 and again in 2009, he was elected as the President of the town council for one-year terms, for two consecutive years. On March 9, 2009, he became the Mayor of Chauncey when the sitting mayor resigned becoming the first Ahmadī to become a mayor of a U.S. town. In the March 4, 2009 publication of The Athens Messenger, a citizen recognized my grandfather's services for the town and referred to him as one of the "Champions of Chauncey."

In his letter to the editor the citizen emphatically wrote: "Dr. Mirza, the president of Village Council, has donated his time as well as his money many times over the years to help out the village. Even before his elected position he bought spreaders for the village dump truck to help keep the streets and roads, clean and safe. He has paid for blacktop out of his own pocket to fill and repair potholes in the village. He has ran a food bank and helped with the homeless, among other things, all with very little or no thanks or recognition." He also built what is now known as Food World in Athens, Ohio on Route 50 W. He diligently served as President of the Athens Chapter for many decades and was a Moosi which means he donated at least 1/10 of his earnings and assets to the Ahmadiyya Muslim Community.

We feed off the intense devotion that was his inspiring life. He humbly yet passionately proclaimed, "It is not possible for a sinner like me to offer enough thanks to Allah for His bounties. He has showered this humble one with so much Grace and Mercy that they are beyond counting. I had resigned from my teaching job at Ohio University in 1972 and since 1972 I never had a job, nor did I look for one. I have spent all this time serving the *Jama'at* (Religious Community). Allah has been very kind and generous to me and I have never suffered. When anyone asks me about my job, my answer always has been: 'I work for Allah and He pays me very well.' In the end, I request prayers for me. May Allah make it possible for me to serve the *Jama'at* till my last breath" (Al Nahl Vol. 23 No. 2 pp. 12). We all stand witness to how God granted his supplications.

All this from a single man of materially humble origins but of a spiritually rich hailing! He was the son of Hadhrat Master Mirza Nazir Hussain and grandson of Hazrat Hakeem Muhammad Hussian aka "Marham Isa" two prominent disciples of his holiness the Promised Messiah and Divine Guide Mirza Ghulam Ahmad of Qadian[as]. It's no wonder the Promised Messiah (on whom be peace) received the Divine revelation "Mubarak Manzil" or "fortress of blessings" about the inhabitants of a house in Lahore belonging to the Miyan family.

His funeral prayers will be read at Baitur Rahman or "House of the Most Gracious Divine", the national Headquarters of the Ahmadiyya Muslim Community, USA, on Friday, (Feb. 15) after the Friday *Jumu'ah* Service. He will be laid to rest at the Lakeview Memorial Cemetery in Sykesville, MD.

In lieu of flowers, memorial donations may be made to Humanity First. Please visit to share a favorite memory of Doc. He is survived by his wife of 56 years, two sons, two daughters, thirteen grandchildren, and three great- grandchildren.

He truly personified this Quranic prayer which captures the essence of his faithful life; "Surely my worship, my sacrifice, my whole life and even my death are all for the Divine One, the Nourishing Lord of all things" (Ch. The Blessings 6:163). Living up to the meaning of his Arabic name given by the holy Promised Reformer (with whom God is pleased), Basharat Munir Mirza was precisely a bearer of glad tidings and a guiding light. O God, our Beloved, embrace him with loving closeness to Yourself and Your Immaculate Messenger Muhammad (peace and blessings be upon him) and grant us the heavenly power to follow the illuminating footsteps of this radiating leader and exemplary servant of yours, *Ameen.*

http://hartfordfavs.com/culture/family-relationships/my-grandfather-a-bearer-of-glad-tidings-and-a-blessed-light
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NATIONAL UMOOR-E-KHARIJA (PUBLIC AFFAIRS) DEPARTMENT

REPORT OF 3rd ANNUAL "DAY ON THE HILL" AND 7th ANNUAL NATIONAL PUBLIC AFFAIRS SEMINAR

Amjad Mahmood Khan, National Secretary Umoor-e-Kharija

On February 15-17, 2013, the National *Umoor-e-Kharija* (Public Affairs) Department hosted its 3rd Annual "Day on the Hill" event and 7th Annual National Public Relations Seminar in Washington D.C. and Silver Spring, respectively. The two events drew an attendance of **92 delegates from 61 Chapters** across America, including Respected *Ameer Sahib*, 4 *Naib Umara* and 4 Regional Missionaries.

"Day on the Hill" Event (February 15, 2013)

For the second consecutive year, the Annual Seminar was preceded by a special "Day on the Hill" event. 77 delegates from 61 Chapters (most traveling together on a bus) participated in a record **391 meetings with U.S. Congressional offices** (House/Senate), including over 60 direct meetings with members of Congress (not staff) at Capitol Hill in D.C. (exceeding last year's output by 300%). *Alhumdholillah.* A special 150-page binder/dossier (with appendices) and a special PR kit were prepared for each U.S. Congressional office. The "Day on the Hill" event was followed by *Jumu'ah* Prayers at the historic American Fazl Mosque.

7th Annual National Public Affairs Seminar (February 16-17, 2013)

First Session: The seminar began on Saturday, February 16 at 9:30 AM with the recitation of the Holy Qur'an by Rashid Mian Syed Sahib. After welcome and introduction by National Secretary *Umoor-e-Kharija* USA, Amjad Mahmood Khan Sahib, Respected *Ameer Sahib* addressed the gathering. During his address, *Ameer Sahib* emphasized the value of collaborative efforts with the *Tabligh* and Media teams and the strength of volunteers working as a united group (similar to what the Qur'an describes in Chapter 62, Verse 5 as a "strong structure cemented with molten lead") Respected Maulana Naseem Mahdi Sahib then delivered an address on the future of Ahmadiyyat in the United States. Citing several passages from the writings of Hadhrat Khalifatul Masih IIra, he discussed the remarkable projected growth of Ahmadiyyat in the United States and how each secretary should work towards making history. Amjad Mahmood Khan Sahib then delivered the annual report of his department, which included the following high level data .which included the following high level data

Category	Total Number
Meetings with members of U.S. Congress (House) (or staff)	831
Meetings with members of U.S. Congress (Senate) (or staff)	132
Meetings with U.S. State Department Officials in D.C.	94
Meetings with other government agencies in D.C.	15
Meetings with U.S Commission on International Religious Freedom	18
Meetings with United Nations officials	10
Meetings with U.S embassy officials	69
Meetings with foreign embassy officials	51
Meetings with officials in China/Thailand/Indonesia/Egypt/Pakistan/ Bangladesh	32
Hearings/briefings in D.C.	10

Meetings with mayors/governors/other state representatives	721
Meetings with intellectuals/professors	142
Meetings with NGOs/think tanks	84
Total # of meetings in all categories	2209

Second Session: Respected *Na'ib Ameer*, Naseem Rehmatullah Sahib, presided the second session. The session began with a discussion on how to prepare local media advisories for local events. Muhammad Chaudhry Sahib, local *Umoor-e-Kharija* secretary for Silicon Valley and media team liaison, along with Qasim Rashid Sahib, carefully walked all delegates through the process of effective local media outreach.

A key objective for this year's Seminar was to have local secretaries cross-train and develop common techniques. To that end, the second session featured a special simulation of how to conduct effective press interviews. During the simulation, all local secretaries were asked to participate in mock press interviews where they were grilled with difficult questions. A panel of judges rated each secretary's participation and provided feedback for improvement. Achraf Ismail of Boston *Jama'at* stood first as "Best Press Interview."

Third Session: Respected *Nai'b Ameer*, Munum A. Naeem Sahib, presided the third session. The session began with a presentation by Amjad Mahmood Khan Sahib and N. Mahmood Ahmad, member of the National *Umoor-e-Kharija* team, about the process of refugee process and resettlement to the United States. The lecture provided a useful primer to all attendees about the critical differences between asylum law and refugee law, common issues facing refugees leaving Pakistan and common misconceptions.

Qudus Malik Sahib, member of the National *Umoor-e-Kharija* team, along with Maulana Naseem Mahdi Sahib, then provided a powerful account of their recent field expedition to Kyrgyzstan to assist with the local *Jama'at's* legal case. They recounted moving details about the strength and courage of the local Ahmadi Muslims.

Fourth Session: Respected *Na'ib Ameer*, Munum A. Naeem Sahib, also presided the fourth session. During this special 2-hour session, Rizwan Alladin, former *Sadr Majlis Khuddamul Ahmadiyya* USA, conducted a special professional workshop entitled, "Leading by Influence." The workshop featured an elaborate and extremely well-formulated simulation involving a mock county. Through a series of crafty exercises, Alladin Sahib taught all delegates the complexities of local outreach, the importance of building a local team and the strength and value of deepening local connections through sustained efforts. After dinner, delegates enthusiastically returned back to the main hall for an unscheduled "wrap up" feedback session on the 2-hour workshop. Members of the National *Umoor-e-Kharija* team joined Alladin Sahib to provide extensive feedback to all teams about their performance on mock exercises. The spirited session showcased a special energy and excitement among all delegates. *Masha'allah.*

Fifth Session: Alladin Sahib continued his workshop with an additional hour of feedback and evaluation. He also announced the results of the mock competition. The team of "Rabwah 5" (led by Dr. Jari Khan Sahib of Dallas *Jama'at*) stood first. Amjad Mahmood Khan Sahib then shared details about expectations and planning for the upcoming Jalsa Salana 2013. He emphasized the importance of understanding the storied *Jalsa* tradition and how it impacts the department's work.

Closing Session: Respected *Nai'b Umara,* Maulana Naseem Mahdi Sahib and Zaheer Bajwa Sahib, presided the final session. Amjad Mahmood Khan Sahib presented the "Day on the Hill" and Seminar report. Maulana Mahdi Sahib then delivered the closing address, in which he shared a powerful account of the life of Prophet Muhammad[saw] and how he patiently endured the tragic loss of many loved ones during his life. Mahdi Sahib said that all delegates should study the life of Prophet Muhammad[saw] and spend the next several months focused on assisting with inter-faith events related to the "Muhammad: Messenger of Peace" campaign. He concluded the Seminar with silent collective prayers.

TaQWA

Department of Taleemul Qur'an & Waqf-e-Ardhi
Ahmadiyya Muslim Community, USA

HIDDEN TREASURES OF THE HOLY QUR'AN

Shehla Ahmad, South Virginia

(This article has been compiled from selective extracts taken from "*Revelation, Rationality, Knowledge and Truth*" written by Khalifatul masih IV, Hadhrat Mirza Tahir Ahmad (rh), Published by Islam International Publications Ltd., Surrey UK, (1998) p.586-605. It is highly recommended that the book itself is referred to in order to have a complete and in context understanding of the subject.)

The Holy Quran is filled with stories of the times past and prophecies of the future as well. The following is a brief mention of some of these prophecies and an explanation of their fulfillment.

The Prophecy about Archaeological Exploration:

وَإِذَا الْقُبُوْرُ بُعْثِرَتْ * 82:5

And when the graves will be laid open.

This verse of Surah *Al-Infitar* is evidently speaking of archaeology and draws our attention to the earlier civilizations. It exhorts man to dig up **their remains and study the factors which brought about their ultimate ruin.**

The following two opening verses of surah *Al-Takwir* predict that Islam will already have gone into decline before the dawn of the new age:

إِذَا الشَّمْسُ كُوِّرَتْ ۞ وَإِذَا النُّجُوْمُ انْكَدَرَتْ * 81:2-3

When the sun is wrapped up; and when the stars are obscured.

It should be borne in mind that the sun and the stars, as mentioned in these verses, refer symbolically to Islam and Muslim divines. The Quran refers to the Holy Prophet[sa] as *Sirajan-munira* (سِرَاجًا مُّنِيْرًا) which literally

borrowed from his light as shining stars. In the absence of Sirajan-munira these holy people still emit enough light to guide the wayward. When the sun is described as having ceased to shed light, it clearly speaks of the decline of Islam. The obscurity of stars by the same logic refers to an age when the Muslim divines would cease to reflect the light of Islam. This inference is fully supported by the verses which follow. They all invariably speak of an age of great scientific, political, and social advancement which evidently is a tribute to the age. Hence, if the main contents of this chapter refer to the material rise of the Christian world, the first two verses must be understood by way of contrast to apply to the fate of Islam. The year 1492 is the most outstanding landmark which separates the old world from the new. The verdict is that of history evidenced by Christian historians themselves. *The Chronicle of the World* has the following to say about the most distinctive feature of that year in relation to Islam:

> 'After a ten-year campaign, Granada, the only remaining Moslem state in Spain, has fallen to the Castilian army. The surrender of the city is being hailed by Christians as the "most single and blessed day there has ever been in Spain". Moslems are describing it as one of the most terrible catastrophes ever to befall Islam.'1

This brought to end the unbroken rule of Spain by the Muslims for seven hundred years.

81:4 * وَإِذَا الْجِبَالُ سُيِّرَتْ

And when the mountains will be made to move.

Mountains in Islamic terminology mean great worldly powers. There are many verses in the Holy Quran which mention mountains with the same connotation. Great material powers would not only rise but move their influence widely from territory to territory, from continent to continent, and bring under their domination country after country. That is how mountains, in their sense, can move and did move.

81:5 * وَإِذَا الْعِشَارُ عُطِّلَتْ

It should be kept in mind that the movement of the mountains can be interpreted as transportation of immense loads as well as the spread of influence of mighty political powers. Both of these definitely require more advanced and powerful means of transport than she-camels. Unless such new means had become available to man, it would be sheer madness on his part to abandon whatever poor means he already had available. He would certainly not abandon the she-camel and start carrying mountain-like loads on his bare back! The inevitable conclusion one is left to draw from this verse is that far more powerful and swifter mechanical means would be invented which would render animal modes as insignificant and obsolete.

81:6 * وَإِذَا الْوُحُوشُ حُشِرَتْ

And when the wild animals will be gathered together.

.....to be continued

Qur'an Learning Status Application (LSAP)

❑ What was done?

- 2,230 children (age 15 and below) belonging to 67 Jamaats and 12 regions have been surveyed during the last year.
- A team of Forty-four (44) volunteers worked for more than two and half months using LSAP application to collect the latest information.

❑ Matrices Collected

- Reading Regularity Analysis
- Learning By Source Look-up

❑ Finding A: Reading Regularity Analysis

Category	Daily	Two Times a Day	Every other Day	Weekly	Twice Weekly	Rarely	Stop Reading	Other*
Count	874	47	367	156	138	82	5	564
Percentage	39.1%	2.1%	16.4%	7.0%	6.2%	3.7%	0.2%	25.3%

** It contains children mostly age three and below. Qaida Yassarnal Qur'an has yet to be started.*

❑ Finding B: Learning By Source Look-up

Children	Mother	Father	Grand Parents	Self Reading	Mosque Classes	Alfurqan Online Classes	Other*
Count	1098	147	92	102	41	73	633
Percentage	50.2%	6.7%	4.2%	4.7%	1.9%	3.3%	29.0%

❑ What is Next?

- Perform deep down analysis against collected data. Identify weak areas and develop strategies to motivate members for Qur'an reading.
- Extend target population up to age 18 for data collection in 2nd Phase.
- Add new features in LSAP application to leverage systems functionality.
- Improve application availability and migrate existing environment to new TaQWA Server.

TaQWA

Stories of the Prophets: Hazrat Adam (as)

Attia Tul Haq, Austin

Living in the West, one often hears of fairy-tale like stories and references to Hazrat Adam (as). Although these stories may capture our attention and fascinate us, they leave us with a sense of yearning for a more scientific and logical explanation of this holy man.

Thankfully, Allah has provided Muslims with an excellent explanation as to the personage of Hazrat Adam (as) and his mission. Hazrat Adam (as) was a prophet who most likely abided in present day Iraq about 6,000 years ago. There are many people around the world that feel that Hazrat Adam (as) was the first man on Earth. Science contradicts this notion and says that man has been living on this Earth for millions of years. As a result, many people have to pick between religion and science. But it has been made easier for the Muslims. In the Holy Qura'an, it categorically states,

" And when the Lord said to the angels: I am about to place a vicegerent on the Earth...."
(Sura Baqarah Verse 31)

Allah tells us that Hazrat Adam (as) was a vicegerent or Khalifa. This verse of the Holy Qura'an rejects the notion of Hazrat Adam (as) as being the first man. The Holy Prophet (saw) also hinted at this by saying, " Allah had brought into being no less than a hundred thousand Adams". In the same way, Hazrat Masih Maud (as) felt that ascribing to this idea of Hazrat Adam (as) as the first man was absurd. In the Malfoozaat he states,

"We do not follow the Bible in holding that the world began with the birth of Adam six or seven thousand years ago and that before this there was nothing and God was, as it were, idle and without work. Neither do we claim that all mankind, who are now found in different parts of the Earth are the progeny of the self-same Adam. On the contrary, we hold that this Adam was not the first man." (Malfoozaat Vol 10 pg 426)

Hazrat Adam (as) was given the first Shariah or Law by Allah. Through him, society was taught basic rules and ways to live. The Qura'an says that the basic requirements of food, clothing, shelter, and water were affixed to the society. (Sura Taha Verses 119,120)

Hazrat Adam (as) lived in a heavenly-like place with his wife Hazrat Eve (ra). Allah commanded Hazrat Adam (as) to eat and drink from his surroundings but to not approach the forbidden tree. The Muslims believe that Hazrat Adam (as) mistakenly ate from this tree and had to bear the consequences. There has been a noteworthy controversy among the great religions of the world surrounding this forbidden tree. Many Christians feel that it was a tree whose fruit gave the knowledge of good and evil. While Ahmadhi Muslims believe that this tree metaphorically stood for a quarrelsome family or tribe. Moreover the Christian doctrine of atonement is borne out of this so-called original sin of Hazrat Adam (as). In the Qura'an, Allah clearly states:
" And verily, We had made a covenant with Adam beforehand, but he forgot, and We found in him no determination to disobey." (Sura Taha Verse 116)

In this simple verse, Allah bears witness to the purity of Hazrat Adam (as) as well as effaces the doctrine of atonement. Because of the lapse of judgement that Hazrat Adam (as) committed, he prayed to Allah and was forgiven. He also had to leave the Eden he live in and migrate to a new area.

"Those who honor the Holy Qur'an will be honored in heavens."

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IMPORTANCE OF THE HOLY QUR'AN

'Say, if the ocean became ink for the words of my Lord, surely, the ocean would be exhausted before the words of my Lord came to an end, even though We brought the like thereof as further help.'

(Al-Kahf, 18:110)

"The Holy Qur'an is an ocean of eternal truths, insights and prophecies."

(Chashma-e-Ma'rifat, Ruhani Khaza'in, Vol. 23, pp. 271-272)

"The Qur'an is my sustenance and is the source of my soul's refreshment. I read it a number of times a day, but my soul never has its fill. It is healing, it is mercy, it is light, it is guidance."

(Hadhrat Maulawi Nur-ud-Din [ra] Khalifatul Masih I, Second Edition, by Muhammad Zafrullah Khan [ra], p.104.)

A true believer proves the superiority of the Qur'an by practicing its beautiful teaching.

(Hadhrat Khalifa V [at] Friday Sermon March 25th, 2011)